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Christianity and Reform.

[Continued from p. 39.]

In a former article, we attempted to show that no real reform in man's moral or social condition can be effected by infidelity. — We now proceed to the consideration of our second point, namely, that the spirit of reform is in fact the very spirit of the gospel. This proposition may require some proof. Every body may not perceive, at first sight, the identity of the spirit of the gospel with that spirit which now agitates "the millions." There are those who look only on the surface of things, and never have any notion of what lies at the bottom; let such as these suspend their judgment, till they have examined and collected facts to make their judgment worthy of attention.

The spirit which lies at the bottom of the movements among the people is the spirit of reform, of progress. It may seem to the superficial observer only the spirit of insubordination, of restlessness, of unnecessary, if not criminal, agitation. But discontent, insubordination, destructive as either may be, should not be condemned. Man is a progressive being. His uneasiness at his present condition is the result of an internal consciousness, — vaguely defined, poorly understood, perhaps, — that he is susceptible of something better. He has an inward thirst for perfection. The millions now feel the workings of this desire, this craving for a more perfect moral and social condition. They are conscious of wants which the present state of things cannot satisfy. They de-

mand something better; they resolve and struggle to gain it. They may not clearly perceive what would be an improvement; they may even place perfection in that which would be a deterioration; but this alters not the character of the spirit which urges them forward. They wish something which will satisfy all the wants of the soul; and if they direct their exertions towards that which will not do this, the defect is not in the spirit that moves, but in the judgment which directs.

The spirit whose movements have encouraged some, alarmed and offended others, is, thus, the spirit of reform, of progress, — a spirit always aiming at perfection. Is not this, in fact, the very spirit of the gospel? To answer this question, one should clearly perceive and fully comprehend the character of that work which the Author of the gospel came into the world to perform.

That work has greatly suffered by not having been understood. He who reads the gospel carefully, bringing to his aid enlightened philosophy and just criticism, cannot fail to perceive that it was not, as too many have imagined, the primary object of Jesus to make us happy in the world to come. If the good he laboured to effect was to extend beyond this life, into that which is eternal, it was only because the acquisition of holiness here sets one so much the farther forward in holiness hereafter. It was this world that he came to bless — man, in his earthly mode of being, that he preached, suffered, and died to make happy. He indeed alluded to another world; he promised the rewards of heaven to the good; he startled the wicked with fears of punishment in hell; but it was, to reach the hearts and consciences of men, to reform the individual, and, through the individual, the mass. The world was wrong, was wretched; he came to meliorate it, to set it right. Hence, the first words which broke from his lips in public were, "Reform, for the reign of God approacheth."

Are there those who deny this? What, then, does the gospel demand? What is it that Jesus requires? Did he not, in his mission, contemplate the production of greater purity of heart, a deeper sense of duty and of individual responsibility? Was not the gospel given to breathe new life into the soul, to urge it on by new and stronger impulses to a higher, a more abiding, an ever enlarging virtue? Did it not, does it not, appeal directly to the individual heart, and seek to kindle up a strong, undying love for all that is

pure, useful, generous, and noble in character; and was it not expressly designed to impart the inward power needed to gain it? Is not here the spirit of reform, of a radical reform?

But this reform is not the production of a moment. It must be gradual, a progress, a growth. The gospel commands us to improve in knowledge and virtue, to "grow in grace," "to press onward and upward towards the mark of our high calling," "to become perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect." It is not with one degree of holiness, not with one step forward in the eternal career of moral progress, that the gospel is satisfied. It is the highest degree, the step farthest in advance possible, that it demands. It has no smile for mediocrity, no indulgence for the indolent. Its look is forward, and if it sometimes permits one to survey the ground over which he has passed, it is not that he may applaud himself for the progress already made, but that he may gather fresh courage and hope for the journey which still lies before. Is not here the spirit of progress, the spirit urging on to perfection?

Nor is it to one individual alone that the gospel appeals, not one alone it would quicken and urge onward in a glorious career of improvement. It appeals to all. What it demands of one individual it demands of every individual. It acknowledges no man's right to be a sinner — declares that no man can be exempt from the law of duty — declares, in terms not to be misinterpreted, to the high and the low, to the rich and the poor, to the bond and the free, that no one has the consent of his Maker to do that which is wrong, or to neglect that which is right. The spirit of the gospel, then, requires a universal reform; it requires every individual to advance, to grow in grace, to press on towards perfection; and does not this identify it, in reality, with the stirring spirit of the times? with the spirit — not of the stationary — but of the movement party?

Does the gospel demand that which is impracticable? Does it demand this extensive, this radical reform, without permitting us to hope that it can be realized? So, indeed, it would seem, from the language of its professed friends. Even religious men brand him who proposes such a reform, a disturber of the peace, call him a disorganizer, and enough of other epithets of reproach. He who ventures to predict that it will be realized, is pronounced a visionary, and people propose a strait jacket, or physic and good regimen, as the

only suitable arguments to be urged against him. "The evils of society," we are gravely told, "always have existed, and always must exist. Man has always preyed upon man, and always will do so. It is in human nature to do so, and he but betrays his ignorance who dreams of a change." Perhaps so. Those who say so are doubtless wise men, men who are well acquainted with human nature in its diseased, if not in its healthy, manifestations. And yet, there is a singular inconsistency in these very wise men. They deny that the mass of mankind can possibly become virtuous; but point them to any particular individual of that mass, and they will admit, that that individual may, if he will, become a high-toned moral being. They thus deny of the whole, what they admit to be true of all its parts, and of parts, too, which are very much alike. For all men have, substantially, the same nature; all have within themselves all the elements of thought, of reason, of virtue. The greatest and best have nothing of which the least and worst have not the germs. And there is not an individual in whom those germs cannot be warmed into life and expanded into a generous virtue. Every man is commanded to love God with all his heart, soul, and strength, and his neighbour as himself. Single out one that cannot do this. Cannot *you* thus love God and man? Cannot your neighbour? his neighbour? and his? Where is there one who cannot? Nowhere? Then all can comply with the requisitions of the gospel. Each individual can reform, can improve, can attain a high moral standing. If each individual can, all can; and, of course, the great mass of mankind can become virtuous.

Should every individual become virtuous, acquire that purity of heart, that firmness of purpose, that love to God and to man, which the gospel demands, that moral growth which Jesus laboured to produce, there could remain no institutions of an evil tendency. All that now bears man down to the dust and darkens his soul would be removed, all social as well as all private evils would disappear, and all governments would be so remodelled, as to have no longer a deteriorating influence. Bad governments, mischievous social institutions, are not to be attributed to the defects of rulers, to their ignorance, to their vices, nor to their crimes, but to the people. No people, worthy of freedom, was ever enslaved. When the majority of a community are really free in themselves, have pure and just principles, firm and manly characters, no tyrant can enslave that community, no mischievous government can

possibly be established over it. Whatever political evils there may be in any community, they must disappear in the exact proportion that the growth of individual virtue demands. Make all men good Christians, — and all can and should be, — all governments would become free, all social institutions beneficial, and man's intercourse with man, harmonious, pleasing, endearing.

That Jesus came to introduce a new order of things, to change, to perfect, man's moral and social institutions has indeed been admitted by some, but so timidly, with such coldness of assent, that the admission has led to little vigorous and well sustained exertion. The great mass of the friends as well as the opponents of the gospel have had but a slight glimpse of this truth. They have said, and still say, that such could not have been his object, because he has not yet accomplished it. But we have seen too many things effected during the last hundred years, which former generations would have pronounced impossible, to regard with much attention the reasoning that would measure the future by the past, that would infer that because a thing has not been it therefore cannot be. The work which Jesus proposed is not, indeed, yet accomplished. That work was immense. The gospel found the human race with false ideas of morality and religion, with mischievous governments, and institutions almost universally opposed to the interests of society. The prevalent modes of feeling, thinking, and acting were wrong. Things were valued in an inverse ratio to their real worth. Fame was obtained, not by real virtue, — not by the preservation, but by the destruction, of human life. War was the business and the glory of governments and rulers. The useful arts were menial, and were assigned to those who had, and could have, no share in what were esteemed honourable pursuits. The worship of God was an outward service, an observance of impure or debasing rites and ceremonies, performed, not at the command of conscience, but of the state or the priesthood. Now all this was to be changed. For the pompous was to be substituted the simple, — for the external, the internal. The mere member of the state or of a sacerdotal corporation was to be converted into an individual, with rights, duties, responsibilities of his own. The useless was to give place to the useful, war to peace, the destruction of human life to its preservation, the false estimate of things to the true; and nothing was to be valued except in proportion to its power to add something to the well-being of man; nothing was to be accounted virtue which might not

do something to develope the spiritual nature, to make man a more elevated moral being, a more pious worshipper of God, a warmer or steadier friend to his race. This was not the work of a day. Without converting man into a different order of being, it could be done only gradually; and because it is not yet completed, shall we rashly say it was never designed?

One great reason why Jesus has not effected more may be found in the contracted notions which have been entertained of his design. Of those who heard him most gladly, few comprehended his object. The ignorant multitude of that day did not and could not comprehend it. It far exceeded their stage of mental progress, to take in the idea of a reform so extensive and so radical as he proposed. They were incapable of understanding that it was an entire new order of things which he wished to effect. They degraded him in their minds, from the dignity of a moral regenerator of the world, to the littleness of a theological disputant. They supposed he had come to change a few items of religious belief, to alter or abolish a few of the forms of religious worship, — that he had come merely to mend with a piece of new cloth a few of the rents in the old worn-out garment of the social and moral system; but they never imagined, notwithstanding they were so informed, that the new would tear away from the old, and the rent thus be made worse, and that the only rational way of proceeding was to throw off the old, and to put on an entire new garment. Consequently, though Christ was nominally preached, for a long series of years his power was scarcely felt, and the great object of his mission was unperceived. People (to borrow, with a slight variation, another scriptural illustration,) people "called themselves by the name" of Christ "to take away their reproach"; but they were "content to eat their own bread and wear their own apparel" — they would fain be known by his name, but in regard to anything beyond this, to any change of life consequent thereupon, they cared not, they thought not. That he had power to touch the heart, — power to quicken the soul, to give it the very life of virtue, — power to change the whole face of the moral and political world, was not dreamed of in the philosophy which, for centuries, usurped the schools and the churches.

Still, the spirit of Christ was in the world. Though the darkness of men's minds and hearts prevented it from being perceived, it was silently, gradually, effecting its work. It touched a heart, here and there. It kindled up the ethereal

fire, now in this mind, now in that. It formed, here and there, little nucleï, around which began to gravitate the immortal atoms of a new moral world, pure and lovely in the sight of God and man. If its power was suspended in this place, repressed in this community, it burst forth with additional energy and glory in that. Meanwhile the world is agitated. Revolutions are daily occurring. All is in commotion. All is in a transition state, although to the spectator all seems settled. Letters revive. Science begins to shed its light. Young thought begins to feel its strength, and to be ambitious of trying its wing. The past is recalled; the present is surveyed. Man sees himself in a new light. Views of his wrongs and sufferings, of his wants and capabilities, are taken from more favourable positions. Governments, religions, social institutions, in general, are summoned to the bar of infant reason. Speculation rushes into the future, and dares picture forth worlds of ideal beauty and felicity for the human race. Practical spirits appear, and resolve to embody what others behold in idea. Now the Son of God comes with power and glory. Now his Spirit, which has so long been trampled upon, which has so long been struggling in secret, looks forth upon the world, and rolls back the clouds of mental and moral darkness. And there is a swelling of men's hearts; and there is hope stretching forth her arms, eager to grasp that greater good which the soul has beheld in vision. Mind redoubles its strength. The individual man now feels, almost for the first time, that he is not a mere cipher, nothing worth only as he is annexed to the state or the crowd, — but that he is a man, with rights and prerogatives. The human race begins its upward and onward career in moral and social improvement. — We call this the epoch of The Reformation. It is that epoch when the power of Rome was shaken, and the human mind was reconquered from her despotism. And the philosophical spectator might have then discerned at work all the causes which are to effect the mightiest revolutions, and to secure results inexpressibly grand and glorious for the whole human race. The gospel works silently, but effectually. At times it may seem suppressed, and fearful souls may imagine the world abandoned to wretchedness and despair. But all this time of darkness and doubt, it is collecting its power for new and more astonishing victories. The gospel was compared to "leaven concealed in three measures of meal;" though concealed its power was not destroyed. In what we now see, in these agitations, these new parties, these

new demands throughout the world, we should recognise its slow but energetic workings to "leaven the whole lump." The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. The mass now feel it struggling within them, and bear witness to its reforming energy; and we may "thank God and take courage." The time draws nigh when it will not be alleged that Christ did not propose to reform the world, because he has not yet done it.

Indeed, if all the glowing and majestic descriptions of the Messiah's reign be not so many rhetorical flourishes, changes of almost inconceivable magnitude are yet to be effected in man's moral and social condition. It was a glorious morning that which dawned on the birth of Jesus. If all Scripture be not a deceptive dream, then commenced a new age, that happy order of things which had been so often predicted, so rapturously sung by inspired bards, and so long desired by all nations. Then the Angel of Improvement hovered with joy over the earth, and saw with rapture, as he looked down the stream of time, the all-comprehensive principles then introduced, gradually, but effectually, working their way through all opposition, subduing all enemies, surmounting every obstacle, and finally regenerating the whole moral world. He saw wrongs and outrages disappearing, — ignorance, vice, and crime yielding up their empire, — man rising from the oppressions of a hundred ages, and looking forth, the image of his Maker, upon a world of beauty. He heard the last note of discord die away in the distance, the tear which the mother shed for her son slain in battle was wiped from her eye, — the sigh which bespoke unrequited affection was suppressed, — man everywhere opened his heart and gave his hand to his brother. He beheld; and gave the shout of joy, which rung back from heaven's hosts: "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will towards men." — The vision of the Angel shall be realized. Man shall yet be worthy of his origin, and be able to rejoice in his destiny.

O. A. Brownson.

Pauperism.

It was customary, as we all know, among the Romans, to make annual donations of corn to the poor; and, in the times of the emperors more especially, immense sums were expended in this way. The evil, however, increased with the supply. The people acquired the habit of depending upon government for support, and, in the same proportion, neglected to provide for themselves.

The system of poor-laws in England, after various modifications, was finally established in 1601, with the same general features by which it has ever since been characterized. Its great objects are: —

1. "Setting the children of the poor to work, when their parents cannot maintain them;
2. "Putting poor children out as apprentices;
3. "Setting the idle to work;
4. "Providing for the support of the old, lame, blind, and such as are unable to work, from infancy or other causes, and to pay for raw materials."

In theory nothing could seem more wise and humane, and we may well doubt whether any laws for the same purpose could be more judiciously framed. How have they operated?

The first assessment (1601) was £200,000, and from that time to this the sum has been gradually increasing. Not that in each year it has been greater than in the preceding year; for, in consequence of a great dearth, in 1801 the assessment was greater than at any former or subsequent time, and amounted to £10,000,000. Still, the poor-rates have been a constantly increasing burden, and now annually amount to about £7,000,000, or *thirty millions of dollars*. In 1833 they were rather more than £8,000,000.

In 1803, according to Mr. Colquhoun, one ninth of the whole community existed, as paupers, vagabonds, and criminal offenders, at the expense of about one third of the remaining population; and since that period the increase both of crime and pauperism has more than kept pace with the increase of inhabitants. The law, therefore, has proved wholly inadequate. It has neither removed poverty, nor diminished it. The sum originally thought sufficient, though thrice, nay, twenty times told, would do little towards removing the wants which are now left untouched.

Again, look at Scotland. In 1700 the poor, in all but

three parishes, were supported by voluntary contributions. These three parishes were in the vicinity of England, and were subject to legal assessments. The evil gradually advanced towards the north, and in 1819 one half the population of the kingdom were assessed for the benefit of the poor. The disease gathered strength as it advanced. The increase of pauperism between 1800 and 1819 was absolutely greater than the whole increase during the preceding century. Not only was the number of parishes liable to assessment increased, but the amount assessed in many parishes was doubled in ten years.

The uniform experience of our own country has been similar. Of the population of New Hampshire in 1800, one in 333 was a pauper; twenty years afterwards, one in 100 was a pauper, and the expense had increased from $17,000 to $80,000.

In Massachusetts, according to Mr. Quincy's report, about one sixty-seventh of the whole population were paupers in 1821; but, if we may rely upon the report made to the legislature last winter, no less than one fortieth (or, including individuals who were assisted out of the workhouses, one thirtieth) of the inhabitants of towns which have workhouses are paupers. In small country-towns the average would be considerably less. But, after all the deductions we can make, it must be allowed that one forty-fifth of our population depend more or less upon public charity for support. The state's poor in 1800 cost $28,000, and in 1821, $72,000, — an increase greater than has ever taken place in England during any twenty years since the reign of Elizabeth.

In New York and Pennsylvania the result has been the same. And why should it not be so? Why should not pauperism, like every other profession, thrive under encouragement? Offer a large bounty to any particular trade, and immediately its ranks will be crowded. The poor-laws say that if any man will not support himself or his family, the state shall support them. What is there, then, to prevent the land from swarming with paupers? Fortunately, the profession here is not yet an honourable one. Men, generally, have an impression that it is better to earn their own bread than to depend upon the public bounty. But these squeamish feelings are gradually disappearing. There are already many who are prevented by no false delicacy from demanding, as their *right*, a support from the hands of their country; and the longer the present laws continue, unless great pains be used to counteract

their bad influence, the less will be the common repugnance to taking advantage of them. But to be more specific.

1. In the first place, poor-laws, as they have generally existed, encourage improvidence and idleness. There always will be, in every community, many, whom nothing but absolute want will drive to labour, and whom nothing but the near prospect of absolute want will induce to make provision for the future. It is easy to see how the poor-laws affect such men. "What is the use of wearing myself out," is the natural expression of the tired labourer, "for the purpose of gaining a living? or why should I submit to such deprivations for the purpose of laying up anything? At the worst, we shall only come upon the town."

There is, in the human breast, a spirit which disdains dependence; and, on account of this spirit, it is believed that few, except the really degraded among us, have been influenced by considerations like those we have just mentioned. This independent spirit it is above all things our duty to cherish. The pain of hunger and want, — starvation itself, — is an inconsiderable evil, in the eyes of the philanthropist, when compared with the base and grovelling passions, the beastly desires, the worse than reptile meanness, of a servile mind. Yet, has it not been the direct tendency of poor-laws, to cherish this dependent character among the indigent? The more common workhouses become, the less will they be dreaded. The honest and industrious, who at first could not endure them, will at length feel that they are not the worst things in the world; that a place there, is not, perhaps, *very* disreputable; and, finally, that it is better than the continual labour and anxiety which they must undergo, if they hold themselves responsible for the support of their families. It is but availing themselves of the provision which has been made for them; it is but taking advantage of what they have a right to. Their exertions, therefore, are remitted; and, by and by, they become pensioners upon the public charity.

It is not poverty, as has been well said, but pauperism, that we should dread as a pest. The poor man, who divides with his family the scanty proceeds of his daily labour, is sustained, amid all his sufferings and privations, by the reflection that he rests upon himself for support. Discouragements may oppress his soul, and, at times, almost grind him to the earth. But the consciousness that what he has is his own, that his food and raiment are the product of his own

exertions, and that, poor and humble as he is, his family look to him with grateful hearts for even the coarse fare that he is able to supply, is enough to sanctify his afflictions, and to make the hardest toil a teacher of the highest virtues that adorn our nature. The struggles of want provide a happy discipline of character. They are the severe but prolific parents of virtue. Numerous and heavy, therefore, as the poor man's sufferings may be, we could not, without painful reluctance, see them removed by the comfortable provisions of public charity. Admitting that bodily suffering could in this way be alleviated, the partial good would bear no comparison with the moral evils that would ensue.

2. We would observe, in the second place, that our poor-laws hold out a direct encouragement to vice. Of the 1,040,716 who were paupers in England, in 1803, three quarters were *culpable* paupers; and the condition of this part of the English population has not been improving since that time. "Of 499 inmates of the House of Industry, in Boston, when it was visited by the agent of the commissioners" (last winter), says Dr. Tuckerman, "three fourths, excluding idiots and the insane, were said to have been brought there by intemperance. Of 3000 who have been admitted to the Salem workhouse, during the ten years in which it has been in the care of its present superintendent, he thinks that 2,900 were brought there, directly or indirectly, by intemperance." So in Marblehead, Cambridge, Charlestown, and in almost every town in the commonwealth, where the statistics of the poor have been taken. So, also, throughout the state of New York. In some counties more than one half, in some two thirds, and in others three fourths of the paupers, became so through intemperance. In the city of New York, January 1833, says the superintendent of the workhouse, "The number of male adults is 572; of whom not ten can be called sober men. The number of female adults is 601, and I doubt whether fifty of them can be called sober women." But intemperance is only one of the vices which lead to pauperism; and, bearing this in mind, it is not, perhaps, extravagant to say, that, excluding idiots and the insane, nine tenths of the adult paupers in this country became so in consequence of their vicious habits.

How are poor-laws, we would ask, to prevent this vice and the poverty consequent upon it? Is it reasonable to suppose that they will do it by crying out, as in fact they do, to the incipient drunkard, or to the man beset by temp-

tation, "Go on in your debauchery; we will take care of your family while you are thus engaged; when your health is injured, we will furnish you with a hospital until it be restored; and when your constitution is broken down, come to us, we will give you an asylum in which the remnant of your days may be spent in peace and plenteousness?" * Is this the way to prevent vice? or do we not rather hold out to it, thus, a direct encouragement?

The argument, however, is met with much plausibility by the assertion that men sin from weakness and not from calculation; that no one becomes a profligate or a drunkard because sure of an asylum for himself or his family in a poor-house. — Will this reasoning stand? Government, let us suppose, offers a direct bounty to all who will engage in a particular species of licentiousness. The law will do no harm, our objectors say. Men become licentious from weakness, and not from calculation. Hence the most licentious government that could be established would not demoralize the people. Can anyone admit this? We allow that men seldom become vicious from calculation. But are there not many standing upon the verge of dissipation, who would fall headlong into the gulf, were the restraints by which they are now held back at all weakened? Are none deterred from the first act of vice by the thought of the consequences to their families? May not their virtuous resolutions be weakened or strengthened by public laws? When it once becomes fashionable (and it is every day becoming so) for the poor to apply to the public and depend upon the public for support, a powerful stimulus to patient labour, and the virtues of industry, sobriety, and economy, will be removed, and the work of corruption will gain strength at every step. This is the way in which bad laws always operate. No community is corrupted by them at once. In bodies politic, as in physi-

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* An article in *The Spirit of the Age*, of January 9, contains the following statements: — "The number of men in the House of Industry [in Boston], on the 1st inst., was 236; women, 162; boys, 89; girls, 80; total, 537 [567?]. In the House of Correction were 74 males and 49 females; total, 123. In the House of Reformation, 61 boys and 18 girls; total, 79. Grand total, 739 [769?]. The first named of the above establishments is supported at an annual expense of over $23,000; the second, near $11,000; the third, between $6,000 and $7,000. On the strength of the thoroughly settled fact that at least *three fourths* of the pauperism among us is owing to intemperance, it appears that the citizens of this enlightened emporium — the seat of good morals and the Athens of America — are paying something over $30,000 a year for the whole maintenance of between five and six hundred drunken paupers."

cal bodies, countless provisions are made to prevent the permanent influence of momentary inadvertencies. Otherwise, neither as men nor as nations, could we live a day. But these saving provisions are effectual rather against sudden aggressions, than against a long course of bad conduct. Continued surfeits will break down the strongest constitution; and a continued course of bad legislation will at length demoralize a people, though its evil consequences may be long prevented by principles which are carefully planted and cherished in the heart of every citizen.

3. Poor-laws have a direct tendency to destroy the feelings of private benevolence. "Go to the overseers of the poor, they will take care of you," * is an excuse which we every day hear. And the answer is reasonable, if the poor-laws are what they purport to be. If public provision for the poor is an efficacious relief to poverty, nothing is plainer than that he, who has paid into the public treasury his just assessment for the poor, is thus relieved, in a great measure, from the duty of almsgiving in private.

But it is principally among the poor and those upon the confines of poverty, that the fountains of private benevolence are thus ice-bound through the influence of a pauper system. It was plainly meant that the poor should most strongly sympathize with the poor. They, more than any others, are conversant with each others' affairs; they better know each others' wants; they better understand each others' sufferings, and the means by which those sufferings may be relieved. If charity consisted solely in giving money, the rich alone could be charitable. But the exercise of this heavenly virtue, which more blesseth him who gives than him who receives, has a wider field of action; and there is, perhaps, no place in which it shines with a diviner lustre, in which it does more to purify the heart, to melt the soul, to soften the rigours of a hard fate, and make men submit to evils with cheerfulness and gratitude, than in the miserable hovel, where the poor give up a part of their own insufficient morsel to those who are yet more destitute. These mutual acts of self-denying kindness draw close the bonds which unite the unfortunate, and do much to heal

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* Since writing this article, the following fact has appeared in the newspapers. If not an argument for our doctrine, it is at least an illustration of it. A stranger in Cornish, N. H., was found upon the road, evidently near his end. While *the bystanders were consulting about making application to the town authorities for his relief*, the poor man arose, walked a few steps, and died.

the wounded and solace the afflicted heart. Now, this family are in want, while their nearest neighbour has something which he can spare. Again, the neighbour is destitute, and the favour is returned. Their good things and their evil things are gladly shared together.

But what is usually the effect of poor-laws upon the charitable feelings of the poor towards one another? — "The great objection to the introduction of poor-laws into Ireland," says a judicious author, who has been much among the Irish, "would be the breaking in upon the humane and charitable disposition. . . . Perhaps there is no country where the kindness of the poor acts more beneficially. . . . The most compassionate class will always be the poor themselves. This is remarkably the case in Ireland. The rich do little; *the poor help the poor.*" In England, if we can trust to a host of writers, the poor look upon each other with jealousy. They regard their brethren as rivals, who would tear the bread from their mouths. Nay, worse than this. The claims of blood and affection are weakened. Parents consider themselves relieved from the duty of supporting their children, since the public has generously taken the burden from their hands; and children who are thus brought up will have little disposition to assist their aged parents. "In Ireland," says the author we have just quoted, "and in those parts of Scotland where the poor-laws have not been used, the affection subsisting between parents and children is such, and the obligation to support each other is felt to be so imperative, that no excuse can relieve the parents from it. *In England the parental and filial affections among the poor are nearly extinguished.*" In those parts of Scotland where poor-rates are established, the same is more or less the case, according to the length of time since they were introduced and the extent to which they prevail.

These are but a few of the objections which have been urged against poor-laws. We have spoken, not of evils which they entail to any considerable extent upon us; but of evils which they have produced, and which they always will produce, where their influence is not counteracted by other causes. With us they are hardly known. They are written in the statute-books; but their influence upon the great mass of the community is nothing. Paupers, as a class, do not exist. But they are increasing; the influence, which is now scarcely perceptible, is constantly growing; poor-laws are

becoming every year more and more an object of importance. Our political institutions, our schools, and, above all, our moral and religious habits, may prevent them from ever acquiring the influence here which they have had in England. Still, we should look to them betimes. It will not do to rely too much upon present impunity. We, above all men, should avoid a temporizing policy. We must remember our duty now, in the days of our youth. Upon some subjects the consequences of our bad legislation will extend to distant ages. Slavery, if attended to in season, might have been easily abolished. We temporized; and what can now be done? Pauperism, as yet, is a small evil. But if it goes on for two centuries more, with anything like the same increasing ratio which has marked its progress for the last thirty years, what shall we do? We shall be brought to that unhappy state, so despondingly described by the historian of falling Rome, when we can neither endure our diseases, nor the violent remedies from which alone recovery can be hoped.

But what shall be done to avert the evil? Shall poor-laws be altogether repealed? We are not prepared to advocate this measure, though sure that many important amendments might easily be made. Most of the ill effects that have attended pauper-laws are to be attributed more to mismanagement and carelessness than to the laws themselves. All such laws are peculiarly liable to abuse. They therefore require uncommon attention both from rulers and people. But if the public mind is kept awake to the subject, ready to detect errors and abuses before they gain a firm hold, a great proportion of the evils which we have pointed out may be avoided. With this severe and watchful scrutiny on the part of the public, bad laws are harmless; without it, good laws are pernicious. It is not from a vain hope to influence legislative decisions that we have thrown out these suggestions, nor from a love of fault-finding; but in order that we might do the little that was in our power to draw the public attention to a subject, which has not yet received from the community the attention that its importance demands.

J. H. Morison.

Letters to Trinitarians and Calvinists.

No. II.

THE UNITY.

Christian Brethren,

In my last communication I stated six reasons for rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity. You will now wish to know the Unitarian belief respecting the nature of God. I answer for myself. I believe God is One; one Being, one Spirit, one Mind. I believe he is one Person, as clearly, as strictly, as entirely, as I am one person. I believe there is no division in his nature, either into persons, or distinctions, or modes, or "somewhats." I believe the Parent of the universe, the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, our heavenly Father, to be the one true God. This I believe for many weighty reasons; six of the most common I will briefly illustrate.

1. In the first place, I believe that our heavenly Father is the only true God, because this doctrine alone is sanctioned by reason and nature. How do you prove the existence of God? you appeal to the works of creation. You take a minute survey of the earth; you extend your view to the celestial bodies; you look into yourselves; and in all these you discover numberless marks of contrivance and design and skill. You affirm that these demonstrate the being and agency of an infinitely powerful, intelligent, benevolent Contriver, Designer, Artificer, Parent. This infinite Spirit you call God. But in order to make your argument perfect and conclusive, you contend that there is a singleness of contrivance, a unity of design, a oneness in the execution of all the works of nature. Consequently, your argument proves most satisfactorily that there is but one will, one individual mind, in the Godhead. This proof is just as strong in favour of the simple unity of God as it is for his existence. And if you give up this evidence which fully establishes the divine unity, you part with the only convincing proof of his being and perfections. I have not room to enlarge. You can examine this point at your leisure. Is it not better to renounce the doctrine of the Trinity, than to sacrifice your only evidence for the existence of a supreme Creator and Father?

2. In the second place, I believe that our heavenly Father is the only true God, because I find this doctrine clearly and distinctly and repeatedly taught in the Old Testament. When the Father of the Faithful was called from idolatry, he received some knowledge of the nature of the Deity. This information was afterwards confirmed to his descendants. What was then the first great command of Jehovah? "Thou shalt have no other Gods before *me*," that is, "besides me," or, which is the same thing, "in my presence;" for even Trinitarian commentators acknowledge that this is the meaning of the Hebrew. The word *me*, as you well know, can mean but one person. If, then, you render supreme worship to other beings besides the Giver of this injunction, do you not violate the first article in the decalogue? In what words was this doctrine repeated? "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord." What were the divine declarations by Isaiah? Listen to three of the most striking. "Is there a God besides me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any." The words *I* and *me* must surely belong to one person. "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." The same remark applies to this passage as to the other. "Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me." Is it possible to mistake the meaning of such explicit statements? Take another specimen, from Hosea. "I am God and not man; the holy *One* in the midst of thee." Now if these expressions, so direct and unqualified, do not prove the simple unity of God, I know of no language which can. These are but a few specimens of the general tenor of the Old Testament; and accordingly, I must believe that our heavenly Father is the only true God. I beseech you to examine the Hebrew Scriptures for yourselves, and if you arrive at the same conclusion, I hope you will declare your convictions to the world and risk all consequences. — *Exodus*, xx. 3. *Deut.* vi. 4. *Isaiah*, xliv. 8. xlv. 22. xlvi. 9. *Hosea*, xi. 9.

3. In the third place, I believe that our heavenly Father is the only true God, because this doctrine has been uniformly received by the Jewish nation. In ancient and in modern times, this has been their distinction. Whether among idolaters or Trinitarians, they have unhesitatingly declared their belief in the simple unity of the Deity. Wherever scattered, however persecuted, they have regularly offered their devotions to the holy *One*. Now is it possible that they have

always misunderstood the meaning of their own prophets, their own Scriptures? Or if such a supposition be possible, how does it happen that they have always been so harmonious on this point, and that no controversy should ever have arisen among them respecting it? This uniform belief of the Jews in the simple unity of God is, to my mind, conclusive evidence that this, and this alone, is the doctrine of their Scriptures.

4. In the fourth place, I believe that our heavenly Father is the only true God, because I find this doctrine plainly and distinctly and repeatedly declared in the New Testament. Jesus was sent to bear witness to the truth. What was his testimony on this question? On a very memorable occasion he uses these remarkable words: "Father, ... this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." You will notice that the word *Father* can mean but one person. You will also remember that the pronoun *thee* can refer but to one individual. You will likewise observe that Jesus himself pronounces *this Father* to be the ONLY *true* God. He expressly distinguishes between his Father, the Sender, and himself, the Sent. Now if this Father was the *only* true God, then surely the person who made this declaration cannot be included in the Godhead. A more striking expression of the doctrine of the divine unity cannot be produced from any Unitarian author. But just reverse the case. Suppose our Lord had said, "This is life eternal, to know thee, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the only true God." Would there ever have been any dispute respecting the nature of Deity? Certainly not. Why, then, should anyone contend against the most explicit declarations of our Saviour? But there are other passages equally plain and conclusive. Take one of the number. "But unto us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." Can words more clearly teach the doctrine of the divine unity? — Such is a mere specimen of the current language of the Christian Scriptures. Read for yourselves; and if you are convinced that Jesus and his apostles firmly believed and uniformly taught that our heavenly Father is the only true God, I hope you will receive this as the doctrine of inspiration. — *John.* xvii. 3. 1 *Cor.* viii. 6.

5. In the fifth place, I believe that our heavenly Father is the only true God, because this doctrine was believed by

the early Christians, for many generations after our Saviour's crucifixion. In proof of this statement I appeal with perfect confidence to ecclesiastical history. I have not room for many quotations, but I will present you with one or two from the learned Trinitarian, Mosheim. In relation to the belief of the second century he furnishes the following facts: "The whole Christian system was still comprised in a few precepts and propositions; nor did the teachers publicly advance any doctrines besides those contained in what is called the *Apostles' Creed.* In their manner of handling these doctrines, there was nothing subtile, profound, or distant from common apprehension." How striking the difference between the teachings of these simple-minded men and the jargon of Trinitarian mysticism! It seems, then, according to the concession of Mosheim himself, that during the first century nothing but pure Unitarianism was taught in the Christian churches. For examine the *Apostles' Creed*, and what hint do you find of the doctrine of the Trinity? "I believe in God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the holy ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the holy ghost, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting." Let the most thorough Unitarian give a formulary of his faith, and in what one particular would it differ from this? — These quotations are sufficient to show you that the early Christians for many years did not believe the doctrine of the Trinity, but considered our heavenly Father the only true God. This conclusion is abundantly confirmed by all ecclesiastical historians of merit. But I would have you examine this point for yourselves, and decide according to the evidence presented. — *Murdock's Mosheim*, vol. i. p. 152. *Lord King's History of the Apostles' Creed*, pp. 47, 48. See also, *The Book of Common Prayer.*

6. Finally, I believe that our heavenly Father is the only true God, because this doctrine alone is adapted to the human understanding. I cannot believe that a Parent of infinite wisdom and goodness would make the fundamental article of his revelation wholly incomprehensible to his imperfect chil-

dren, and to many of them appear really contradictory to the clearest dictates of reason. I cannot imagine that he requires us to adopt a sentiment which is nowhere distinctly expressed in any one passage of the whole Bible. I cannot think that he would put an everlasting stumbling-block before the portals of his spiritual kingdom. I must conclude that if he revealed anything concerning his nature, this revelation would be adapted to our feeble capacities. Now the idea of one universal Father is intelligible to a child of the tenderest age, and on this account is the gospel adapted to the capacities and understandings and necessities of children. It is good news to all, and especially to those who have long wandered in the mazes of idolatry. No one can rationally object to the doctrine. It is retained by the living members of the Ancient Church; so far, then, is the way clear for them to embrace the gospel. It is already received by the followers of the False Prophet; and thus are they in a measure prepared to listen to the claims of Jesus and his divine religion. It is acknowledged by the company of deists, whom absurd dogmas have caused to reject all special revelation; and thus are they in a condition to be brought back to the fold of Christ. It is what the heathen need, and will readily embrace when it shall be properly presented. It is adapted to the human understanding and the human heart. As a disciple of the Saviour, as a friend of my race, I cling to this truth with unshaken confidence. I have tried both systems and I find this far the better faith by which to live. The doctrine of the Trinity gave me nothing but perplexity, uneasiness, dissatisfaction, doubt, and unhappiness. The doctrine of the unity of God gives me peace, and comfort, and joy. I believe it to be, also, the best doctrine by which to die; for I have known those, who had given it a fair trial, leave the world in triumph. But while I feel thus confident, I shall ever aim to manifest perfect charity towards all who reject this fundamental article of my Christian faith. Still, let me entreat you, before you conclude to reject it, to examine the Scriptures, and judge for yourselves as to what they really teach.

Thus, Christian brethren, you have my six reasons for believing that our heavenly Father is the only true God. I would remark, in conclusion, that I feel much more confident that my view of the nature of Deity is true, than you possibly can that yours is. For you cannot bring a single passage from the whole Bible which teaches or implies your article of faith. You can refer to but two verses which have any bear-

ing on the question in dispute. You cannot reconcile your human creed with the decisions of reason or the instructions of revelation. Now I find the doctrine of the divine unity distinctly taught in every part of the sacred writings; and this truth is amply confirmed by the dictates of the human understanding. Shall I, therefore, proceed to condemn you for embracing what I consider an irrational, unscriptural, injurious error? I have indeed a thousand times more apology for such a course than you can possibly have in relation to the condemnation of Unitarians. But no. The mischief does not consist in our differing so widely on this important topic. It consists in your unwillingness to grant us the same rights which you claim for yourselves. If you will show us the same charity which you actually need from us, we may live together in peace and harmony and love.

Respectfully,

B. Whitman.

Letters from the South. No. I.

New York, *Dec.* 15*th.* 1833.

Agreeably to my promise, I now sit down to put together a few of my notes. From so rapid a journey as mine you must not expect much. I will give you what I can. My stay in this city is necessarily very short; I shall leave to-morrow. But as I have made the best of my time, I trust that the remarks I may make on a few topics may not be altogether unacceptable to you.

I have just come from a very interesting conversation at ———s, on the condition of the poor in this city — to which, of late, the public attention has been strongly arrested. I am told that very few can form any conception of the amount of poverty, dissoluteness, intemperance, and dishonesty, mutually acting on each other among the lower classes. — I may remark, by the way, that the under-population of the city is composed almost entirely of foreigners. Nearly all the objects of charity are of this class. It is rare that you find a very poor New-Englander. — Pauperism here, is not, indeed, what it is in Europe, yet it is a disorder sufficiently alarming. Street-begging, I believe, is almost unknown;

but solicitations at the doors of private houses are very frequent. Cases of all sorts of deception are nearly as numerous as the applications for relief and assistance. A friend has told me that, within his own experience, eight instances out of ten were of this kind; and his is not the only testimony I have received to the same point. Many of the abandoned are supported by sending out such children as they can lay their hands on, with fictitious stories of distress; soon teaching them the requisite arts of deception, in the use of which they speedily become adroit. Many of the more ingenious paupers are not behind their brethren over the sea in devising the semblance of bodily sufferings and deformities. Unfortunately, the amount of charity bestowed is equal to the demand. The promiscuous charity is immense. This, it has been demonstrated, is only a bounty on pauperism and dishonesty. Accordingly, the more judicious have adopted the rule of giving no assistance, in any case, until they have previously ascertained the actual condition of the applicant. Of course, his place of abode is inquired for. But in most cases it happens that his habitation is not to be found.

To meet the present condition of the poor a large expedient has been devised. You doubtless observed, in Mr. Barnard's First Report of his ministry at large in Boston, an allusion to the Society for Promoting Education and Industry among the Poorer Classes of this city. This society originated, I believe, with a Mr. Curtis, a goldsmith. Its object is to raise the moral character of the poor, to find employment for the idle, and to be the channel through which all charities are dispensed. In theory nothing can be more wise, liberal, and generous. The outlines of the plan are these: — First, there is the society at large; then, an auxiliary association in each ward of the city. Each of these sub-societies appoints from its members a number of visitors, larger or smaller according to the wants of the ward. Every ward is divided into districts, and each district has as many visitors as its extent and condition may require. In some districts, of course, there are no poor. It is the duty of each visitor to give to the paupers within his limits such instruction and assistance as comport with the design of the institution. It would seem, at first sight, that on such a plan everything might be accomplished, especially as regards the prevention of promiscuous almsgiving, and the lending encouragement in many ways to those whose situation might preclude their obtaining employment. Yet it is thought by some that the society will

accomplish little or nothing. The office of a visitor of the poor, it is said, is one which demands great and peculiar exertions. Nothing can be accomplished without constant labour. There is demanded, also, a very considerable knowledge of human nature, great tact, and an intimate acquaintance with the condition of the poor. It is urged, that many, perhaps the most, of those members of the society who are its visitors, being men actively engaged in business, are not able to afford the time and labour necessary to this great work; and that on account of their habits of thought and life, they must be, to a very considerable degree, deficient in the necessary knowledge and skill. This can be obtained, even by a man of the requisite talents, only after much experience. A visitor of the poor should be trained to his work. He should be, in every respect, a practical philanthropist. His office should be regarded as a profession, as much as any other. For these reasons, it is thought that the society, although erected on such a liberal and generous foundation, must be inefficient. One thing is wanting, it is believed, to enable it to do all that such institutions can reasonably be expected to accomplish, — which is, that the society should incorporate with its own plan that of Dr. Tuckerman. It is urged, that each ward, instead of appointing its own members to visit the poor, should support one or more individuals, as may be required, as their representatives, who, with the requisite qualifications, should devote their whole time to the work. This would make the institution complete, and then, probably, it would regenerate the city. — But trouble is looked for from another quarter, and how much it may affect the influence of the society it is impossible to tell. There are some among the more bigoted ultra-Orthodox of the community who look upon it with suspicion or hostility, as a sort of monster, of which it were wise to beware. They say that it originated with and is supported by infidels and (if one may be allowed to make the distinction) by Unitarians, — some of whom, by the way, are among its most efficient friends. And although it numbers among its members many who are sound in creed, yet what good, it is asked, can come of thus unequally yoking the faithful to unbelievers? What can be expected of an institution which employs so many unholy hands in its councils and labours? The reason of all this outcry is, that the society has seen fit to insert an article in its constitution by which it is prohibited from printing and circulating any sectarian publications. Still, it does not exclude the communica-

tion of as much practical instruction as the visitor may see fit to give. If such bigotry did not receive our profound pity, it would be beneath our contempt. Such an institution, however, is loudly demanded here, and if it is built on a safe foundation, it will hardly be shaken by the envy of fanaticism.

After service to-day, I spent two pleasant hours with Mr. Arnold, who, you know, is a minister at large in this city. Perhaps some of your readers may not be aware that this gentleman is supported in his office by subscribers to the object in Mr. Ware's and the Second Church — both Unitarian. He is principally confined to the eighth ward, although he sometimes extends his walks into the ninth. He has lately opened a hall in Prince street, where he has a morning and evening service on the Sabbath, and attends a Sunday-school from one to three in the afternoon. The number of his hearers is about forty, on the average. Among them are some few Unitarians, who, on account of their local situation or pecuniary circumstances, have connected themselves with him permanently. There are usually from thirty to forty children in the school. He told me that his success, although he came to this city an entire stranger, had been thus far nearly equal to his expectations, which were not low. He thinks that, in a good degree, he has won the confidence of most of those whom he visits. Connected with his mission is an association of ladies, belonging to the two societies which I have just mentioned, whose object is to furnish clothing &c. to those whom the minister at large may think proper objects of such charity. They have been his very interested and efficient supporters.

The prospects of the spread of Unitarianism in this city are not great. The spirit of inquiry has never been awakened here. I judge there are not a few infidels to be found in respectable classes of society, who have gradually slid by easy transitions into unbelief, without the aid of any serious investigation. Indeed, in such a city as this, where error and fanaticism and violent dogmatism have been continually breasting the barrier which an age somewhat enlightened has set up against them, it were sufficiently wonderful if there were not many of this class. In a city where Calvinism has been so long exhibited in its most revolting forms, where fanaticism has been so rife, where the dogmatism of the clergy is so great, and the power of denunciation so often tried, it cannot

be strange that many should be driven into hostility to the claims of religion, and more into indifference. Yet there is no spirit of inquiry. Some violent commotion is needed, it may be, to disturb the waters — the heavy tranquillity of unbelief, the unconscious submissiveness to the voice of authority, and the timid reverence for old forms. — The two Unitarian congregations are composed almost entirely of New-Englanders. Few or no converts have been made. Perhaps one reason is, that the more northern style of preaching is not efficient for the south; something more impassioned, something which will *take* more immediately, is needed. A very intelligent gentleman from Washington said to me, "The more cool and sustained style and manner of preaching, which is persuasive at the north, will not suit us. We want something more vehement and forceful. Without it our people will not put themselves in the way of hearing Unitarianism." But the great reason is to be found in the apathy of the public mind to all religious investigations, united with the violent prejudice, in particular, which there is against our faith. What can you expect where so many firmly believe, what they have been told by their religious teachers, that it is no less than spiritual death to hear our "infidel" expositions of the Bible, which are the more subtle and destructive because the ingenuity of man is aided by the wiles of the Devil? However, a time must come. Yet we are not altogether without encouragement. Mr. —— said, "It is my firm conviction that a man of the requisite talents and devotedness, who should come to this city and be willing to 'cast his bread on the waters,' — let him preach in a hall at first, — would gather around him a respectable Unitarian congregation. With the right manner, he would make some converts, and would be joined by those whose local situation might render it inconvenient for them to attend the other Unitarian churches in the city." He instanced some large societies which have grown up in this way. He told me, that, the day before, a gentleman had come to him from the east part of the city, requesting his assistance in building up a Unitarian society in that section. The gentleman told him that there were a dozen or more Unitarians in the immediate circle of his acquaintance, and that he could not doubt there were many beyond it. This indicates that much may yet be done to diffuse the influence of pure Christianity in this great city.

A few evenings since, I stepped into Dr. ——'s vestry,

and found there a large congregation. Dr. —— is more known, I believe, than any other Presbyterian clergyman of this city. I went with the expectation of being edified if he had a practical subject, but was disappointed. The devotional exercises were cold, and I thought not sufficiently reverent; certainly, they were not impressive. In the manner of the lecture, which was extemporary, there was a good deal of trick. The comparatively unimportant introduction and passages which required no particular emphasis, as well as those parts which should have been more impressive, were characterized by the same management, the same monotonous modulation of the voice — now loud and hard, and anon sinking away into an inaudible whisper — now declamatory, and now familiar. I can imagine, however, that such a manner might have affected many of his hearers, had there been a current of feeling in it. But there was not. To my "Unitarian coldness," the light, irreverent, and, as I thought, somewhat flippant manner of his closing exhortation, was anything but pleasing. I thought that among the causes which make men trample religion under their feet as the dust of the earth, such a manner might not be inoperative. Calvinism is essentially cold and hard. However, there is this to be said, that with men who are so continually obliged to traverse the same round of unvaried exhortations, almost from hour to hour, such services must necessarily be little more than a form, which the exhausted intellectual and moral powers are incapable of filling with life. Perhaps I am wrong in sending you this critique on a familar lecture; indeed, I should not have said so much, were the manner to which I have alluded peculiar to Dr. ——; but you, as well as I, have observed that it belongs to a certain class of preachers.

But I have filled out my sheet. You may hear from me again soon.

Yours, very sincerely,

J. Q. Day.

The Son of Man.

Whoever has read with attention the books of the New Testament, must have observed how frequently our Saviour calls himself the Son of Man. This seems to be his favourite appellation, the title by which he chose to designate his office and destination. It is a name given him by no other but himself. Among the many instances in which it occurs in the gospel history, there is only one in which it is not used by Jesus, and he seldom uses any other. This fact seems to authorize the supposition that the title in question is more truly indicative than any other of the Saviour's character and commission; and if this be the case, it is the duty of every Christian inquirer to ascertain its true meaning and import. Let us, then, see what is meant by the title, Son of Man, and in what sense it is applicable to the Messiah.

According to a well-known idiom of the eastern languages, which was closely followed by the writers of the New Testament, the word which signifies *son* has also many other significations. It is used to denote various relations besides the filial relation, and, among others, the relation of office and of destination. Thus "the children of the bride-chamber" are those who have offices to perform at the marriage-ceremony; the "sons of the kingdom" are those for whom the kingdom was designed; and so Jesus may be called the Son of Man, inasmuch as he was destined to become the teacher of men. Again, this word is used in connexion with any particular quality, being, or thing, to denote a person distinguished for that quality, or possessing the attributes of that being or thing. Thus the wicked are called "sons of wickedness;" the afflicted, "sons of affliction;" St. Paul says, "All who are led by the spirit of God are the sons of God;" and in this sense Jesus is called the Son of Man, because he possessed, while on earth, the attributes of humanity. It was, probably, in this sense that our Saviour assumed the title. He used it to indicate his human nature, and the peculiar relation in which he stood to men as their saviour and guide; just as he used the term, Son of God, to denote the very different relation which he sustained to the divine Being. We are to understand, then, by the term, Son of Man, nothing more than, simply, *man;* we are to understand by it that Jesus was the representative of human nature, such as it will

be when completely redeemed, enlightened, and sanctified. He was a living example of humanity carried to perfection. And this, perhaps, is the most profitable way of considering Jesus's life and commission.

I do not intend to use this interpretation of a scriptural phrase as an argument for any one of the conflicting theories respecting our Saviour's nature and origin; on this subject I profess not to have formed, nor to be able to form, a decisive opinion. I understand not the mystery of the Word, and am persuaded that no one can know who the Son is but the Father, and he to whom the Father will reveal him. We read of an in-dwelling, in-forming power, coëval and coördinate with God, manifested first in the creation of the world, and then in the revelation of divine truth; but whatever may have been the nature of this power, it is certain that the instrument with which it wrought for us in the revelation of the Christian religion was an instrument of flesh and blood; it came to us in a human form, it spoke to us with a human voice, and enlightened us by a human example. Whatever Jesus was in the sight of God who sent him, to us he exhibited himself as a man; his appearance was strictly human; he was born, grew from childhood to maturity, lived and died on earth, as a man; widely distinguished, it is true, in power, virtue, and holiness, from all others who have ever before or since borne that name, but still resembling them in all the visible features of his being here. We are to consider him, therefore, as the intended pattern of what human nature would be, if fully unfolded and redeemed. He was perfect, but his perfection was the perfection of humanity; and we are justified in the conclusion, that whatever he showed himself to be, it is in the power of man to become; whatever we admire in his character and conduct is but a representation of the virtues and perfections, the power, intelligence, and love, which man may attain to, and which shall yet be made manifested in the sons of God. Whatever human nature has of capacities yet undeveloped, whatever attainments in knowledge and strength lie within the reach of humanity, are more or less clearly unfolded in the life of Jesus; and this, I repeat it, is the most instructive and encouraging view we can take of his life. As the Son of God, he demands our reverence; as the Herald of a divine law, as the Teacher of precious truths, he claims our attention; but as the Son of Man, he moves our hearts, and awakens our deepest love. No other name which the Saviour bore places the object of his ministry

in such a pleasing and affecting light, brings him so near to our wants and affections, or connects him so closely with human interests and human hopes. We had need of such a redeemer. How could our erring race have been reclaimed and our fallen nature regenerated, but by the labours and the example of one who took upon himself our infirmities, struggled with our temptations, wept at our griefs, and overcame the world with our weapons? I can conceive that God should have revealed himself in a different way; I can conceive of other and more striking methods which he might have chosen to declare his will, and make known those truths through the belief of which cometh salvation; but I can conceive of none that would have been so effectual in the redemption of man. He might have written his command, with its threats and promises, in the heavens, so distinctly that everyone might read and understand; or he might have commissioned a seraph to traverse the earth from north to south, calling upon men everywhere to repent; and men would have read the command and heard the call with an anxious desire to obey and be saved; but *the way* and *the light* which we have by the Son of Man would have been wanting, an example of *human perfection* would have been wanting, an instance of righteousness complete in every point and fitted to the circumstances and conditions of the world in which we live would have been wanting, an instance of virtue victorious in every possible trial and triumphing over suffering and death would have been wanting, and with our present constitution these wants would have been fatal. Whoever understands the necessities of human nature, must see the necessity of a human ministry in reconciling man to God.

It is not necessary to enumerate all the advantages that flow from a human ministry, but a few of them deserve our notice. There is one which will readily suggest itself to every mind; I mean the benefit we derive from a human example. None but the example of a man can fully answer the purposes of an example unto men. We may form an image of divine perfection and make it our model; but what mortal can hope to be like God, whose ways are as far above our ways as the heaven is above the earth? What he is and does by the law of his being, we must do, if we do it at all, I had almost said against the laws of our nature, I mean with infinite toil and difficulty. Neither could the example of an angel, supposing an angel to have wrought for us and among us, be sufficient to the end proposed in the ministry of Christ; for

angels know not our trials, they have never drunk of our cup, nor been baptized with our baptism. But in Jesus we have a son of man perfect in holiness, a human example of that which is required of human nature, a living proof that man may become what man is commanded to be. Such an example begets a blessed trust in human nature; it is a commentary on the divine law, full of instruction, encouragement, and consolation; it shows that the way of duty is never impracticable, nor the crown of righteousness unattainable; it breathes a joyful confidence into the feeblest Christian who sincerely follows after righteousness, and causes him to pant more earnestly for the kingdom of God.

Again, we shall perceive the necessity of a human ministry, if we consider the manner in which God has chosen to conduct the affairs of the moral world. It is his way to act upon the soul, not suddenly, but gradually; he affects the generations of men, not by abrupt and insulated acts, but by a series of influences. He carries his purposes by the continuous operation of secondary causes; and employs the combined agency of institutions, each one of which would alone be inadequate to the end proposed. Accordingly, the end proposed in the Christian dispensation, that is, the salvation of man, must either be inconsistent with all the known operations of God's moral goverment, or it must be accomplished, not by a single word from heaven, but by the gradual operation of such institutions as we now have. But to establish such institutions and to give them that sanction necessary to secure their perpetuity, there must needs be a Christian sect, which should be able to trace its history with certainty to the precise period when a divine communication was made. In order to this, it was necessary that, in the beginning of the Christian era, an association should be formed like that of the twelve apostles, who by their labours might disseminate far and wide the doctrines they had received from their common Master, establish the institutions which he had appointed, and thus lay the foundations of a perpetual church and an everlasting kingdom. Now how could such an association have been formed without a son of man for their head, without a human leader, a being who though far above them was yet like them, one of their own kind, a being of whom they might learn as of a teacher from heaven, and yet in whose steps they could follow, as in the steps of a fellow-man, with a reasonable hope of emulating his example? Such an one was Jesus Christ, the messenger of God and the teacher of

men. Coming with authority from heaven, and yet living and dying on earth as a man, he was the being to reconcile man to God, and to establish a kingdom of divine origin and power, yet having its foundation in the eternal principles of human nature, and bearing a beautiful analogy to the whole plan of Providence as displayed in the natural and moral world.

Furthermore, let us remember the influence of the love which we feel for Christ considered as a fellow-being who laboured, suffered, and died in our behalf. I believe that with the true Christian this love is the strongest motive to Christian excellence. It was the sentiment which acted most powerfully on the early disciples, which nerved and manned them for the dangers of their ministry, sustained them in all its fearful trials, gave them that spirit of enterprise which led to such unwearied exertions, and enabled them to meet death firmly and even cheerfully in defence of the cause they had espoused. Nor did this sentiment perish with them; in all ages and stages of the church there have been many, who, from a love of Christ, have imbibed the spirit of Christ, and have been led by a veneration of his character to the imitation of his example. Now if instead of a being clothed in a human form, possessing human attributes, and tempted in all points as we are, God had sent us an angel from heaven, having no similitude to man nor anything in common with him, we should regard such a messenger with reverence and, it may be, with love, but not with that fervent gratitude which the Christian feels towards his Master; for our gratitude to any finite benefactor must needs be proportioned to the toil which we suppose him to have spent and the sacrifices we suppose him to have made in our behalf; and we cannot suppose that the work which was so difficult and painful to a human nature would be equally so to an angelic nature. We are bound to Jesus by a sympathy which never could exist between us and a superior order of beings. It is impossible to contemplate the scene which passed in the garden of Gethsemane on the night preceding the crucifixion, and to reflect that the being who stands foremost in that scene suffered the same pangs which any one of us would suffer in view of an ignominious and painful death, without experiencing an emotion of gratitude, pure as our love of God, and warm as our love for the children of this earth, such an emotion as only the Son of Man can excite.

In addition to these considerations let me mention one

more, namely, the encouragement and confidence which the ministry of Jesus gives to our noblest exertions and our dearest hopes; to our noblest exertions, because it shows, as I have observed, that the righteousness which is required of us has been attained on earth; to our dearest hopes, because in the history of Jesus we learn that these hopes have already been realized by one who inhabited a mortal tenement, because in the resurrection of the Son of Man we have an earnest and a pledge of our own immortality.

Such are some of the benefits of a human ministry. It is well for us that we have this ministry. It was well that the Word became flesh, that the Son of God was also the Son of Man. Are we beset on all sides by temptations? we can look to one who was "tempted in all points as we are, and yet without sin." Hath it pleased God to visit us with afflictions? the gospel points us to the thorn-crowned Jesus, and says, "Behold the Man!" however great the trials you are called to bear, he hath borne greater; however great the task you are called to perform, he hath done more. I am convinced that, for practical purposes, the views which have been offered cannot be urged too strongly; we cannot dwell too much on those points in which our Saviour's condition resembled our own. We should remember that like us he was exposed to temptation; he might have abused his miraculous powers in the pursuit of unworthy objects, he might have made them subservient to the gratification of his earthly appetites, he might have astonished the multitude with stupendous prodigies, he might have raised himself to the summit of temporal power and made the kingdoms of the earth his own; but he did not for a moment think of attempting any of these things; he sought only to do the will of his Father, and there was no guile found in him. He resembled us in those feelings and emotions proper to man. Remember how he wept at the grave of Lazarus, and how he mourned at the thought of Jerusalem's downfall! The sight of little children drew from him expressions of the tenderest regard. We see him moved with compassion by human wretchedness, and warmed with just indignation when he purified the temple, and rebuked the hard-hearted Pharisee. He resembled us, further, in his dependence upon God, and on all occasions he manifested a deep sense of that dependence. He often communed in secret with the Father who sent him, looked to heaven for support, and sought the aid

of the Almighty in prayer. "Of myself," he says, "I can do nothing;" "I am come in my Father's name;" "As the Father hath taught me I speak these things." When overcome with anguish at the thought of his approaching trial, he fortifies his soul by submission to his Father's will; and the last words which he uttered, while expiring on the cross, were, "Father, into thy hands, I commend my spirit."

But there is one point, it will be said, in which Jesus was widely distinguished from us; and that is, in the possession of miraculous powers. In this respect he was indeed widely distinguished from us, and seems like a being of a different order; but when we reflect on the nature of a miracle,—when we consider the promise which our Saviour gave his disciples, that if they had faith they should be able to do what he did and should find nothing impossible,—when we remember that God did also work miracles by the prophets who preceded Jesus, and by the disciples who came after him,—the distinction between him and us, even in this respect, will be found to be a distinction of office rather than of nature.

God forbid that these remarks should lessen, in any degree, our reverence for the great Author of our religion! they are designed to increase that reverence and to make it more effectual. The views which have been offered are not mere speculations, they have their practical importance. By considering Jesus as the representative of man such as he is designed and destined to be, as the personification of all that is good and holy in us, we give to his life a new meaning and importance. The Saviour's history has never yet received the attention which it deserves, considered as a part, and a very important part, of the divine revelation. Christians of all ages and climes have searched the Scriptures rather for speculative than for practical truths. Every word of Jesus and his apostles, which was supposed to bear in any way on the points at issue between contending parties, has been brought into notice, criticized, explained, strained to a wider or a narrower interpretation, as it suited the views of this sect or that sect; but while the doctrines or supposed doctrines of our religion have been made the subject of endless controversy, the gospel history, with its deep meaning and its rich funds of practical wisdom, has passed unnoticed, like a common tale. Let not such neglect be laid to our charge, but let us bestow on the works which Jesus wrought the same study and attention which we give to his doctrines. The Saviour's life is as important a subject of investigation to his

followers as his teachings; and it may even be more safely relied on as a source of religious truth, inasmuch as actions are less likely to be misrepresented than words. Let us, then, seek instruction from the Saviour's actions. Let us contemplate him, not only as he is exhibited to us in those great and momentous points where he seems to us like a being from above, and shines as with a light from heaven — in the wilderness of temptation, on the mount of transfiguration, and in the place of Calvary, — but let us follow him through the whole of his recorded life, from Bethlehem to Jerusalem, from his baptism to his grave. Let us watch him in the most trifling passages of his ministry, at the marriage-feast, at the table of sinners and publicans, and on the waters of Gennesareth. Let us learn of him as he is exhibited to us in public and in private, in the temple and in the family circle, by the sea-side and by the grave-side, in the presence of joy and of pain, in the presence of man and of God. Let no act that is recorded of him pass unnoticed, but be treasured up as a lesson of deep wisdom. Let us learn to consider every fragment of his life as having a double value, an historical and an emblematic importance, as a memorial of what our greatest benefactor was and did, and as a presage of what we may be and do. Let us learn to regard his history, not as the history of an individual only, but as the history of man; of man, not as he now is, or has been, but as he may be, and, we trust, will be, "when the Son of Man shall come in his glory."

F. H. Hedge.

Letters to Unbelievers.

No. I.

NATURE AND CAUSES OF INFIDELITY.

Fellow Citizens,

You seem to practise no special concealment of your opinions respecting religion. You openly reject Christianity, and many of you boldly attack the foundations of natural theology. Your leaders are constantly inviting controversy, and attributing the silence of believers to cowardice. I have determined to accept their challenge. I am ready to give

the subject of infidelity a thorough discussion. I trust I shall not disgrace my profession by the exhibition of an unchristian spirit. I have no personal or party purposes to serve. I am truly desirous of doing good to you as a body, and also of benefiting mankind. The public must be the jury, and by their decision we must abide. My first object will be to expose the unreasonableness of your cause. In this introductory communication, I shall confine my remarks to the nature, causes, occasions, and existing state of infidelity.

I. *Nature of Belief and Unbelief.*

1. Who is the believer? Who is the Christian? Who is the disciple of Christ? Our divine Master can answer these questions most satisfactorily. "Jesus, therefore, said to those Jews who believed on him, 'If ye adhere to my doctrine, ye are truly my disciples.'" According to this declaration, all who receive Jesus as their religious Teacher and believe in the doctrines he taught, may be called believers, Christians, disciples. This definition will include all who conscientiously consider themselves the sincere followers of the inspired Teacher; for it leaves every individual to decide for himself as to what particulars are embraced in the Christian doctrine as laid down in its records, as also which of the many branches of evidence for Christianity is most conclusive. Some think that they discover in the teachings of Christ many doctrines, others fewer. No mortal, however, has a right to determine whether his fellow-men believe too much or too little. There is, also, among those who claim the Christian name almost every variety of character. But no human tribunal has ever been authorized to declare the degree of holiness essential to present discipleship or future salvation. I would, therefore, concede the Christian name to all who profess it; leaving it to conscience and the Searcher of hearts to determine whether and how far they are justly entitled to it. — *John* viii. 31.

2. Who, then, is the unbeliever? Who is the infidel? Who is the anti-christian? These questions must be answered in accordance with my former conclusion. I must, therefore, declare that all who reject Jesus as their religious Teacher and disbelieve his doctrine, are unbelievers, infidels, anti-christians. A person may receive all the doctrines of natural religion, may believe in the immortality of the soul and in a future retribution, may be a worshipper of God, may even acknowledge the excellence of the Christian morality, may

revere the character of Jesus as the purest and most exalted which has ever been presented for the imitation of man, — still, this alone by no means entitles him to the name of Christian; he may make no pretensions to the name; he may be nothing more than a mere deist. In a word, while I dare not deny the Christian name to any who may claim it, I must regard as unbelievers all who professedly disown Christ as their religious Teacher and reject his doctrines. I consider the definitions now given sufficiently explicit and accurate for all the purposes of the present discussion. For I leave each of you to determine for yourself, whether you reject Christ and Christianity, and whether you will be called an infidel or a Christian.

II. *Grounds of Belief in Christianity.*

Christianity is embraced on several different grounds, which I will now consider. Some believe on the evidence derived from prophecy, miracles, history, the effects of the gospel. They have given the various branches of the argument a candid examination. They have carefully weighed the objections which have been urged from the first ages to the present period. They have arisen from their thorough investigation, firm believers in the divine origin of the Christian religion. Among this number are included many of almost every denomination. This is, however, peculiarly the case with men of liberal education. Look into our community, and you find our distinguished statesmen, lawyers, physicians, professors, and scholars, included in this description. In this section of our country you can scarcely find an exception to this statement.

2. Some believe on the evidence derived from the Scriptures themselves. They have searched the records of revelation with patience and prayer. They have often perused the artless and unstudied narratives of the evangelists. They have noticed the change which took place in the opinions and conduct of the apostles, on the resurrection of their Master. They have deeply studied his history, his works, his words, his character. They feel perfectly satisfied that no unlettered fishermen, that no men of learning, could have described such a person as Jesus, unless he really existed, discoursed, conducted, as they have represented. They are firmly convinced, from his life and death, his doctrines, precepts, and prophecies, that he was no impostor and no en-

thusiast. They discover a truth, a beauty, a sublimity in his religion, which elevates it above any earthly origin. And although they may be at a loss how to refute all the cavils of unbelievers, they have come to the deliberate conclusion that Christianity is the truth of God.

3. Some believe on the evidence of their own consciousness and observation. They have formed Christian characters. They have learned to love and worship their heavenly Father. They have imitated, in some humble degree, the example of their chosen Master. They have endeavoured to live soberly, righteously, godlily. They know, from their own experience, that their obedience of the gospel requisitions produces pure and unalloyed happiness. They also know that their deficiencies and failings give them more or less misery. They know that the great truths of revelation are perfectly adapted to the essential wants of their nature. They know that its consolations and hopes are admirably calculated to keep them from iniquity, to stimulate them to the acquisition of the highest degree of mental and moral excellence, to support them under their trials and perplexities, and to comfort them under the severest afflictions. They know that the religion of Christ is able to sustain the soul in the hour of death; for they have seen their friends leave the world in joy and triumph. And although they are ignorant on many subjects, although they may not answer all the objections you bring against their views, yet they are thoroughly convinced of the truth of Christianity from the testimony of their own consciousness and observation; and you can no more shake their faith by your reasonings than you can remove mountains by means of them.

4. Some believe on the testimony of competent and unprejudiced judges. All have not the leisure and information necessary for a thorough investigation of the Christian evidences, or for a perfect understanding of all parts of the sacred Scriptures. All have not formed Christian characters. Yet there are many, who are not included in either of the other classes, who must not be considered unbelievers. They rest satisfied, in this instance, as in a thousand others, with the assurance of those who have fairly and candidly examined the whole subject. Let me illustrate this assertion by an example. Some men of learning have studied the science of astronomy. They assure you that the earth revolves on its axis once in twenty-four hours, and moves round the sun once a year. You believe these and similar facts, al-

though contradicted by your senses, on the word of these learned men. Now the same individuals have also investigated the science of religion. They express their firm belief in the existence of God and the truth of Christianity. Have they any stronger motive to deceive in the latter case than in the former? Are they not as well qualified to decide according to the evidence presented, in the one instance as in the other? If you rely on their testimony in relation to the facts of astronomy, where is the consistency of rejecting their testimony in relation to Christianity? There is none. Many, however, do act consistently, and believe the gospel on the word of competent and impartial witnesses.

Such are the grounds on which Christianity is believed. All these, however, may not be known to everyone. Sometimes an individual is influenced by the first three; sometimes, by the last three; sometimes, only by the third and fourth; according to his education and habits of thought. Even those who rely simply on the testimony of others may feel as much confidence in the truth of the gospel as they do in a thousand other facts about which they entertain no doubts. Every believer, however, should examine both the external and the internal evidence for himself; and especially should he form a Christian character. Then his faith would rest on a rock.

III. *Causes of Unbelief.*

There are several causes of infidelity, which I will now illustrate. Ignorance of the evidences of Christianity is the principal. Although the evidences for the truth of natural theology and for the divine origin of the gospel are abundant, conclusive, and intelligible, yet the great majority of Christian parents have strangely neglected to teach any portion of them to their children. Although, in this section of our country, ample means are provided for the education of all classes, yet this most important branch of instruction has seldom been introduced into our schools and academies. Although we have had an active and conscientious clergy, in whom the people have confided, yet they rarely instructed their hearers in this most essential subject. Hence, the great mass of our inhabitants have arrived at years of maturity without any satisfactory knowledge of the grounds on which the whole fabric of our religion securely rests; consequently, some of the number become an easy prey to the sophistical arts of the unbeliever.

2. Ignorance of the Scriptures is the second cause of unbelief. Although we have had them in our houses and perused them in our families, although we have heard them read in our schools and churches, although we have been familiar with the sound of their phraseology from infancy, although we profess to make them the only standard of our religious faith and practice, yet it is a most lamentable fact that multitudes have arrived at maturity without any correct understanding of their contents. Various causes have contributed to this result; their being written in languages now dead; their constant allusion to manners, customs, and events, with which we are unacquainted; the incorrectness of our translation; its divisions into chapters and verses without any regard to the sense; the common practice of reading them as a task in childhood; these and other cirstances have greatly conspired to render them obscure, uninteresting, and uninstructive. Hence, those who have obtained but a slight and superficial acquaintance with their truths are not able to discern their beauty, harmony, sublimity, which have satisfied thousands of their divine origin; consequently, some are easily led astray to infidelity.

3. The want of a Christian character is the third cause of unbelief. Some parents suppose that their children come into being totally depraved, and that they can do nothing but sin until converted by the special influences of the holy spirit. They have, therefore, neglected to cultivate, in their tender years, in a proper manner and to a proper degree, the peculiar graces of the gospel. Others, who believe that their offspring are born unpolluted, have not adopted the necessary measures for preserving their purity and innocence, and for bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Others, again, who are truly pious, have not felt qualified to impart religious instruction to their rising families, or to train them to the duties of holiness. And there are a still larger number, who make no profession of religion, and who are not so inconsistent as to attempt to instruct others in that which they do not themselves possess. In our schools very little attention has been given to the Christian education of the pupils. The clergy, in too many instances, have rested satisfied if the lambs of their flocks recited the Assembly's Catechism. The consequence of all this past neglect is, that multitudes have arrived at years of maturity without that love to God and Christ and man, which peculiarly constitute the Christian character. They are, therefore, destitute of that

experimental evidence of the truth of the gospel which may well defy the assaults of infidelity.

4. Want of consistency in receiving human testimony is the last cause of unbelief. This assertion may be illustrated by an example. Suppose you were divided into two parties on some law question. You ask all the judges in the commonwealth to meet and hear the cause. You lay before them all the evidence on both sides. After a thorough investigation they give a unanimous opinion. They declare that the case admits of no doubt; and that any jury on earth, who should be governed by the common principles of evidence, must return a certain verdict. Would either party carry the question into court? No. Why not? Because you have obtained the candid opinion of a large number of legal gentlemen, who could have no motive to deceive you. Very well. These same individuals have examined the evidence for natural and revealed religion. They have given the opposers of the truth a fair and patient hearing. They assure you that Christianity is true; and that any jury on earth, infidel or Christian, must give a verdict in its favour, if governed in their decision by the common principles of evidence. This is the well known fact in relation to all our judges. Now why do you not abide by their unanimous decision, in the latter case as well as in the former? Are they any more liable to be deceived, or have they any stronger motive to deceive others, in the last instance than in the first? No. Here, then, is a glaring inconsistency in the conduct of many who have looked only at one side of the question in relation to Christianity.

Such are the causes of infidelity. More or less of the number exist in the minds and hearts of unbelievers. Sometimes all are combined in the case of one individual, and sometimes only a part. But to find a person who has thoroughly examined both sides of the evidence for natural and revealed religion, who has a correct understanding of the meaning of the Scriptures, who is possessed of a Christian character, who acts consistently in relation to human testimony, and who yet is an unbelever, is an utter impossibility.

IV. *Occasions of Infidelity.*

There are several occasions of unbelief, which I will briefly mention. Unreasonable claims for the Bible have occasioned some to reject all revelation. They have heard Christian preachers affirm that all parts of the Hebrew and

Christian Scriptures were given by special divine inspiration, that every word is inspired, and that no errors are to be found in either the Old or the New Testament. They have opened the sacred records, and discovered some sentiments which could not have emanated from our heavenly Father, and some mistakes and discrepancies which could not have been dictated by the infinite Jehovah. Instead of giving up the indefensible theory of verbal and plenary inspiration, as thousands of believers have done, they have very unreasonably discarded the whole volume, without any proper examination, and taken sides with the infidel.

2. Irrational, absurd, and inhuman doctrines have occasioned some to renounce all religion. They have heard opinions advanced for Christian truth, which contradicted the clearest dictates of reason and experience, which outraged the best feelings of the human heart, and which could not be reconciled with the paternal character of God. Instead of discarding these as the corruptions of Christianity, like thousands of our best Christians, they have very unwisely rejected the blessed gospel itself, without any satisfactory investigation of its pages, and united with the anti-christian.

3. The fanatical extravagancies of Christians have occasioned some to reject Christianity. They have witnessed the disgraceful scenes sometimes exhibited in a modern revival. They have heard the heated rhapsodies, the unscriptural denunciations, and the unreasonable requisitions of some of the leaders — their artful contrivances, their disingenuous management, and their shameful practices. They have become thoroughly disgusted with the want of common sense, candour, honesty, and charity, often manifested on such occasions. Instead of denouncing these as the delusions of misguided zealots, like thousands of every denomination, they have very hastily condemned religion itself, and given their influence to the cause of infidelity.

4. Deception in religious experience has occasioned some to renounce Christianity. They have passed through a revival. They have been overwhelmed with anxiety and sorrow. They have been excited with song and triumph. They have related most satisfactory accounts of their conversion. They supposed the work of reformation was accomplished. They expected to find the performance of every Christian duty easy and delightful. But after a short interval, their unnatural elevation has departed. The same tastes, the same propensities, the same habits, which they

possessed before their supposed regeneration, remain and are active. They find that they have been deceived. Instead, therefore, of correcting their previous notions by more just views of the nature of religion, like thousands of Christians, they have very strangely denounced all religion as a delusion, without knowing anything of its real character, and taken up arms with the enemies of revelation.

5. The unchristian temper and conduct of misguided believers have occasioned some to condemn Christianity. They have known individuals of their acquaintance who were made worse by a supposed conversion, — who became less kind, affectionate, and amiable, — manifested much self-righteousness, spiritual pride, and uncharitableness, — became exclusive, bigoted, and gloomy, — neglected many of the important duties of life, and frowned on its innocent amusements. Others, who have made great professions, have been guilty of various crimes, such as dishonesty, unkindness, licentiousness. These unchristian dispositions and actions of self-deceived and imperfect believers have influenced the opinions of some who were lookers-on respecting religion itself. Instead of condemning what is expressly forbidden by the Saviour himself, like thousands of his worthy disciples, they have very inconsistently rejected an essential good on account of its occasional abuses; and aimed a death-blow at that religion which is their best friend.

6. The disputes of Christians have occasioned some to oppose revelation. There exists a difference of opinion among believers on many important topics of religion. Each individual feels confident that his views are both true and valuable. Hence, various books are published on the points in dispute. Some individuals, who have little or no interest in such discussions, consider all such writings as weak or injurious. They do not examine them sufficiently to understand the argument on either side. They are careful to notice all manifestations of an improper spirit, and all offensive and severe personalities. They conclude that all this trifling is designed to keep the people in a quarrel, and to secure money for the authors. Instead, therefore, of regarding religious controversy as necessary, and all unchristian remarks as blamable, like thousands of every denomination, they have very unjustly turned against all revealed truth, and joined hands with its violent opposers.

7. Erroneous instruction in childhood has occasioned some to renounce Christianity. They were early taught catechisms

and human formularies. They were induced to believe that certain opinions were essential to the gospel. In after years they have not been able to find any scriptural foundation for many doctrines which they had considered most precious. They have experienced a most heart-sickening disappointment. They have been almost ready to accuse their teachers of wilful deception. Instead of rejecting these human additions and errors, like thousands who have found themselves in a similar predicament, they have neglected further investigation into the meaning of the Scriptures, and most unreasonably united with anti-christians.

8. Modern Universalism has occasioned some to renounce the gospel. They adopted irrational principles of interpretation. This became necessary in order to exclude the doctrine of future retribution from the Scriptures. These principles destroyed all evidence of a future existence. They acted in consistency with their modes of sophistical reasoning. They rejected all revelation. This is the testimony of some who were once active members of that denomination, but who are now among the leaders of the infidel party. Had they adopted correct principles of interpretation, admitted the doctrine of a righteous retribution in the future state, and cultivated piety in their own hearts, as some of the number have done, they would at this very time belong to the company of consistent believers.

9. Personal depravity has occasioned some to deny the truth of all religion. Either they were avaricious, and endeavoured to destroy Christianity because its institutions required some pecuniary aid for their maintainance; or they have been actuated by a love of singularity, a pride of opinion, a consummate vanity, or an inveterate prejudice. Either they were unprincipled, and wished for a license to indulge their vicious propensities; or they were abandoned, and endeavoured to make themselves believe what they hoped might prove true. From all these classes the ranks of unbelievers have been greatly increased.

10. The exertions of infidels themselves have occasioned many to join in opposing the Christian religion. These individuals have exhibited a zeal worthy of a better cause. They have published papers, pamphlets, books, in no small quantities; and they have spread them through the community with great industry. They have urged them upon the attention of the young, the credulous, the uneducated, the unguarded, the unprincipled. They have talked long and

plausibly with those over whom they could exert an influence, and represented their own happiness as completed by the renunciation of the Bible. They have lectured in the city and in the country; and what with sophistical reasonings and bold assertions and sneering ridicule, they have made many proselytes to their cold and heartless system of belief.

All these, I call *occasions* of infidelity, and not *causes;* for if the individuals who have taken sides with the unbeliever had been well instructed in the gospel and its evidences, if they had possessed a Christian character, and acted with consistency in relation to human testimony, they could not have been driven from a belief in Christianity by the errors, or follies, or vices, of its misguided friends. They would have done, as thousands and tens of thousands of the most worthy men in the world have done, — rejected every thing irrational, unscriptural, and immoral, and still held fast to the eternal and unchangeable truths of Jehovah.

V. *Infidelity in this Country.*

Almost every variety of opinion prevails among modern unbelievers. This I learn from your papers, books, lectures, and conversation. While some profess to have no belief in God, others seem to entertain correct notions of the universal Father. While some pretend to have no faith that such a person as Jesus Christ ever lived, others consider him either an imposter or an enthusiast. While some hold to a future state of righteous retribution, others have no expectation of another life. While some consider the soul material and mortal, others regard it as spiritual and immortal. While some condemn the Scriptures as a forgery and an imposition, others suppose they were written generally by the persons whose names they bear. While some confound all moral distinctions and ridicule virtue and vice as mere unmeaning words, others bestow no small praise on the code of Christian morals. Many are unable to make any clear statement either of what they believe or disbelieve. If they can put down the Bible, the Sabbath, and the ministry, their object would be accomplished. In short, there is no agreement in sentiment whatsoever among unbelievers.

2. There are various degrees of education among modern unbelievers. In this section of our country, infidelity is principally confined to individuals of very moderate information. Some of the number must be ranked among the most igno-

rant; while others have obtained a smattering of the ancient languages, and a superficial acquaintance with some of the sciences. With these small attainments, they are able to make considerable impression on the minds of the unlettered. In all New England I do not know a person of thorough education and a truly virtuous character who is willing to be called an infidel. As we proceed south and west, the case is somewhat different. Although in those regions many of the least educated belong to your party, there are also some of the better educated. The latter have never given their attention to Christianity itself or to its evidences. They have heard and read sentiments which believers pronounced evangelical, and these they have unhesitatingly rejected as cruel and irrational. Whenever liberal and correct views of religion have been presented for their acceptance, they have given them a cordial welcome. If we are but faithful to Christianity, many of this number will cease to be ranked among the opposers of revealed truth.

3. There is likewise a great variety of character among unbelievers. Many have received their education under Christian influences. The virtues they have imbibed from early instruction and from Christian example remain in some vigour. Others, again, have no moral principle to deter them from iniquity. Public opinion is their standard of duty. So long as they can gain property and secure popularity, they remain contented. If we take into the account, as we ought, in making this estimate, all who denounce religion, we shall include a multitude of the most abandoned. For whoever knows anything of this subject and is willing to acknowledge the truth, must admit that a very large proportion, if not the whole body, of profligates and criminals, are secret or open unbelievers. Their want of conformity to the requisitions of that gospel which they condemn is the sole cause of their vice and wretchedness. I mention this merely as a well-known fact, and not as an unmanly taunt. In my own mind I have no doubt that infidelity naturally and necessarily tends to sin and misery in this world. This is the uniform testimony of all experience.

4. It is impossible to form any correct estimate of the number of unbelievers in our country. For in the first place, they have not organized themselves into societies, and have never published any statistics of their party. They have, indeed, occasionally boasted of the spread of their views, but in many instances without foundation. In the second place,

a change is constantly going on in their ranks; for either some religious excitement, or some affliction, or some examination of evidence, or some view of the pernicious effects of unbelief, is constantly bringing individuals back to the Christian fold. Judging from considerable personal observation and much inquiry, I think that some Christians have magnified their strength far beyond the truth, while others have gone to the opposite extreme. There have always been more or fewer unbelievers in every Christian land. Sometimes they have found it politic to keep silence and pass for Christians, and at others, they have found no inconvenience in declaring their infidelity. This is peculiarly the case at the present moment. Freedom of opinion and speech is enjoyed by all classes; and since every religionist may state and defend his belief, the irreligious exercise the same right with the greater confidence and security. I rejoice that they have thrown off their disguise, and taken their stand as anti-christians. We now know our opposers, and can adapt our teachings to their necessities.

Such, unbelievers, is a brief statement of facts respecting the nature, causes, and occasions of infidelity. Their correctness will not be doubted by those who know themselves and the religious condition of those around them. My way is now prepared for a more direct examination of your modes of reasoning.

B. Whitman.

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

A Dissertation on Native Depravity. By G. Spring, D. D.

It is known to most of our readers that Dr. Spring is pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church in the city of New York. He considers himself a "consistent and thorough-going Calvinist." He has made an octavo pamphlet of ninety-three pages on the subject of Native Depravity. His object in this book appears to be two-fold: first, to controvert the theory "advocated at New

Haven and Andover;" and second, to state and defend the old Calvinistic doctrine as he understands it. From this publication we learn several facts of importance respecting the progress of truth. A few of the most prominent we shall extract for the information of our readers. From the following quotations it will be seen how the Orthodox doctrine of depravity has been discarded by some of the most distinguished men of the denomination:—

"The first assault upon the doctrine of Native Depravity was from the New Haven school, and in their own covered way to the field. Some few ministers of the gospel, in high standing, and hitherto supposed to be attached to the doctrines of the Reformation, began to speak with an indefiniteness and looseness on this subject, to which they had not been accustomed. They were not prepared either to defend or deny; but their minds seemed to be in a state of painful hesitation. *They could not tell;* they did not know, what the Bible taught in relation to the native character of our fallen race. Ask them whether men are born sinners, and they would tell you, *We do not know.* Ask them whether infants possess any moral character, and they would reply, *We do not know.* Ask them whether they are accountable beings, and they would tell you, *We do not know.* Ask them whether they need the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and they answered, *We do not know.* Ask them what becomes of infants when they die, and they said, *We do not know.* Ask them whether death in relation to infants is by sin, and they will say, *We do not know.*

"But this period of hesitation and skepticism has gone by. The scriptural doctrine of Native Depravity is now boldly denied. Plain and palpable efforts are now made in a number of reviews of the works of Bellamy, Edwards, and Dwight, the design of which is to set aside their views on this and other kindred doctrines. For a considerable time past, it has been unhesitatingly maintained, that all mankind are born destitute of moral character, and are neither holy nor sinful; that though they are destitute of original righteousness, they are free from sin, and have no moral corruption of nature or propensity to evil; that they are perfectly innocent; that they have no more moral character than animals; and that they come into existence in the same state in which Adam was before his fall, and in which the holy child Jesus was when he was born in the manger."—pp. 3–5.

This is sufficiently explicit. We are very glad to learn from so good authority that the distinguished Professors at New Haven and Andover have at last adopted our views on this important subject. But how do these gentlemen explain those passages of Scripture which have usually been quoted by Calvinists in support of the old doctrine of depravity? Let Dr. Spring answer:—

"Their exposition of them symbolizes with the exposition which has always been given by writers of the Pelagian, Arminian, and Unitarian schools. Turnbull, Taylor, Whitby, Priestley, Belsham,

and Ware, have no controversy with the theology of New Haven, or the Biblical Professor at Andover, so far as it respects the instructions of God's Holy Word in relation to the doctrine of Native Depravity. We have deeply regretted this, and tremble for the ark of God, exposed as it is to this unhallowed temerity. But it is well, perhaps, that some gentlemen are throwing off the mask, and avowing their Pelagian and Arminian sentiments." — pp. 33, 34.

This is also good news. It is a cheering thought that Andover, New Haven, and Cambridge are united on the important subject of human depravity. May the time be near when the views of the Professors shall also coïncide in relation to the nature of God and his Son. But is Dr. Spring willing to remain united with his heretical brethren? Hear his own remarks in answer: —

"To me it appears that this and kindred doctrines ought to draw a dividing line between ministers and churches. Nor is the church safe without this division. Much as I mourn over the fact in one view, in another I rejoice at it. Though I have seen enough of a divisive spirit to bewail divisions; though I have peculiar reasons to lament it; though I have many a time said, with the prophet, 'Wo is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife!' and though I love old attachments and old friends; I may not consult considerations of this sort, at the expense of material and fundamental truth. I sigh for union and peace in God's long disjointed and contending heritage, but not with the loss of this cardinal doctrine of his word. It would be criminally deceitful to profess to unite with men and measures whose views and influence obviously tend to obscure the truth and retard the advancement of the Redeemer's cause. The unwearied assiduity with which this error is diffused calls for wakeful effort. And, if I mistake not, the *spirit* with which it is disseminated is indicative, vainly indicative, of triumph. I regret to say that it is a bold and vaunting spirit, and has treated the doctrine of Native Depravity and other kindred doctrines as though they were some latent part of mystical Babylon, which must *certainly* and *soon* come down. Let ministers and churches look about them. Let them read and investigate. And let him that readeth understand. Let the ministers of our own beloved but bleeding church, especially, stand firm and erect in their defence of the truth of God and their attachment to our invaluable standards; let Presbyteries be firm and faithful; let all watch and pray for more of the spirit of their divine Master; and unless he designs to bring upon us days of deep darkness, these moral pollutions, which already begin to corrupt our revivals and lead away our youthful professors, will soon disappear." — pp. 83, 84.

This is certainly consistent with Orthodox usage, to call a man a heretic the moment he rejects one article of the human creed or "invaluable standards," and exclude him from Christian fellowship. But what influence have these rational and scriptural views of depravity exerted on the Orthodox churches? Hear the testimony of Dr. Spring: —

"It was with the denial of this doctrine that the errors of the once evangelical churches in New England began. Let the history of

Unitarianism in Boston and Cambridge, and the history of this controversy, as it has been developed in the Christian Spectator, published at New Haven, be our comment on this remark. Let the history of the Christian church in all ages speak, and it will speak the same language. Wherever the doctrine of Native Depravity has been denied or called in question, there all the discriminating doctrines of the gospel are or soon will be loosely taught, and a kind of religion prevail very diverse from the religion of our fathers, and, as we judge, from the religion of the Bible. We know this suggestion is indignantly repelled. But facts are stubborn things. I have taken not a little pains to ascertain the state of vital piety and the character of the revivals of religion in those churches and institutions where this error prevails, and the result is a thorough conviction that the error is fraught with mischievous consequences to the souls of men. This single doctrine of Native Depravity will be found to lie near the basis of all the differences between Pelagians and Arminians, on the one hand, and consistent and thorough-going Calvinists, on the other."

Is this the very fact? We dare not deny the assertions of one who has taken so much pains to ascertain the truth on this subject.

We have not room for further quotations on these points, but must hasten to give a brief notice of the very peculiar belief of our author. What, then, is the theory of Dr. Spring respecting Native Depravity? I will present his own language: —

"Every child of Adam is a *sinner*, and from the moment he becomes a child of Adam. He may not be a sinner in the eye of men, but he is a sinner at heart and in the sight of God. . . . He is, at the instant of his creation, capable of possessing a moral character; and is, from his nature, a moral and accountable being, under a law which he either obeys or transgresses. If his moral feelings are not right, they are wrong; and if he is not a holy and virtuous being, he is a sinner."

"By the wise appointment of a righteous God, this primitive sin [of Adam] constituted all his posterity sinners. When he fell, prospectively considered they fell; and from the moment of his apostacy, the entire race, of every age and every condition, down to the last infant that should be born on earth, rose up to the view of the Divine mind as lost and ruined by their iniquity. Such is the condition to which the first apostacy introduced the race."

"There are several texts which are supposed to teach the opposite doctrine, and distinctly to affirm the *innocence of infants*. But is it so? I affirm, confidently, there is not one in all the Bible! . . . God is not bound in *justice* to save them; and whether he saves the whole or a part, he saves them as a matter of mere mercy, through the blood of his Son. . . . They are born in sin. They partake of the same sinning, corrupt nature with their parents. From the crowns of their heads to the soles of their feet, they are full of wounds and bruises and putrefying sores, that have not been bound up, nor mollified with ointment. Their hearts are full of evil, and in them there dwelleth no good thing. They are estranged, from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent. It is as natural for them to sin as it is

for the sting of a serpent to be poisonous. They are under the wrath and curse of God, and there is no redemption for them but through the propitiation of his only Son. What spectacle is more affecting than an immortal being entering upon its only probation with such a character? Every time you look upon a little child or a sleeping infant, you see — what? An apostate sinner; man fallen; human nature in ruins. When you clasp your fond babes to your bosom, well may solicitude and compassion find a dwelling within your heart. With all these lineaments of intelligence and of beauty and amiableness, they are dead in sin. That warm heart that trembles and beats at your side beats iniquity and death." — pp. 10, 17, 19, 34, 52, 87.

And these are the little children whom Jesus took in his arms and blessed! and said, "Of such is the kingdom of God!" But to proceed.

"All sin, whether in infants or adults, is without excuse. Who will say that sinful emotions in an infant mind are not criminal? Who has not felt that he ought to be more deeply humbled before God for having been a sinner from his birth? An enlightened conscience never originated the excuse that men are less guilty because their guilt commenced with their existence. For one, I have no such refuge, no such cause for self-gratulation and self-complacency, that the time was when I was not a sinner. Nor is my Native Depravity my misfortune merely, but my fault. Sure I am that I stand condemned at the bar of God for my Native Depravity. Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come." — p. 87.

We trust we have given sufficient quotations to satisfy our readers. We could present many more, equally revolting and horrid, not to say irrational and unscriptural. We have no disposition to controvert this novel theory. The Professors at New Haven and Andover will attend to this business. An answer to the Dissertation is already announced, which we shall endeavour to obtain and notice. It is well to know what our Orthodox brethren are doing among themselves.

B. Whitman.

A Discourse on Education. Delivered before the Legislature of the State of Indiana. By Andrew Wylie, D. D.

Dr. Wylie is president of Bloomington College, in the state of Indiana. He was removed from Washington College in Pennsylvania to this situation about five years since. He was then regarded by all denominations as the ablest Presbyterian divine west of the mountains. He was invited by the joint Committee on Education of the two Houses to deliver a discourse

on this subject before the Legislature. His performance gave very general satisfaction, and by a vote of the House of Representatives two thousand copies were published, and distributed throughout the state. At the time of its delivery there were many complaints concerning the religious opinions of the author. He was accused by the more rigid of several sects of being a Unitarian, of preaching nothing but Christian morals, of keeping back the essential doctrines of the gospel. Let us see how he addressed the assembled wisdom of Indiana on the subject of religion.

"We have seen already that morals should be taught in our public seminaries. Now morals have ever been considered as standing in close and intimate connexion with religion; and did time permit us farther to pursue our analysis of the principles and laws of human nature, we might easily show that man is constitutionally formed by nature to be religious. He is a religious being, in the same sense that he is a sentient or a rational being. His senses sometimes deceive; yet still he is sentient. Reason may mislead him; yet he is rational. So his religion may be wrong; yet he is religious. Some men have professed, and no doubt very honestly attempted, to disbelieve their senses; but nature proved too strong for them, and compelled them to submit, in practice, to the government of that evidence which, in theory, they denied. Others have attempted to reject all kind of religious belief; but with as little success. Wherever there is an appetite, it must have food; and the mind will cleave to error rather than to blank nothing. A mysterious and awful impression of an overruling Power has been found in the minds of all men. This impression is the elemental principle of all religion; and ought to be cherished and directed, that is to say, educated, not destroyed.

"But here lies the difficulty. Our population is divided into sects almost as distinct as the regions whence they came; and I am compelled to add, that between these sects there does not seem to exist, I will not say, that entire *harmony* which ought to characterize the followers of Him who wished those only to be recognised as his disciples who should be distinguished by their mutual love, but even that degree of *forbearance* which we look for among all men who are not actually engaged in a state of war. Ranged under the names of their respective parties, they seem to vie with each other in illiberality, bigotry, and mutual hatred. Yet they all rail against infidelity! How inconsistent! For if what they *act* (for I care not for a mere profession,) be Christianity, I should like to know what harm there is in being an infidel, or how much farther a man removes himself from the love and favour of God by adopting the belief that he is not bound to hate, vilify, and calumniate his fellow for not belonging to the same religious party with himself. I do not mean to insinuate that this rancorous spirit of sectarian zeal is more prevalent here than elsewhere; but where it does exist among us, I perceive it goes to greater lengths and exists in a state of more vigorous activity. This is easily accounted for. This region is considered as *vacant space*, and all are in haste to occupy it, each sect with its own peculiar tenets, before it shall be occupied by others. For sectarianism has a very strong propensity to propagate itself. Urged by this procreative instinct, it is perpetually seeking where it may deposit its seminal

principles, which future care may cherish into life; and nothing exasperates it so much as to be baffled in these attempts.

"Now there is no better or surer preventive of the many evils which flow from the prevalence of this vile and odious spirit than to give to morality and religion their proper place in a system of liberal public instruction. If you would exclude little ideas from the mind, fill it with great ones. If you would furnish your sons with proper conceptions of the character of God, give them the capacity to view his works. If you would teach them what true religion is, send them direct to the Bible, qualified and prepared to hold over its sacred pages the lights of literature and science. If you would not have them dogmatical and obstinate in their opinions, let them know how *others* have thought and reasoned. In short, if you would have them preserved from every illiberal bias, and made gentlemen, Christians, and valuable members of society, store their minds with useful knowledge; let them become conversant, as far as practicable, with the whole round of science. Then will they see how confined are the bounds of human knowledge, compared with the infinitude of things which lie beyond, and be modest; then will they contemplate the stupendous grandeur of that almighty One, who made all things and with whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and be humble; and then will they learn the weakness of human nature, and be more ready to make allowances than to censure and condemn.

"The opinion seems to be entertained by some, that because there are so many different notions on the subject of religion, and because there is found so much of bigotry and illnature connected with these notions in the practice of those who entertain them, the safest way would be to banish all religion entirely from our schools and seminaries of learning. But would this be practicable? Would it be desirable? 'Sectarianism!' cries one; 'our youth will be corrupted by sectarianism!' But who are you that give the alarm? Have *you* no religious opinions? 'Yes; but ours are right and all others wrong.' Modest enough. But others will say the same in turn; and there is no infallible pope to decide between you. 'Let us have no opinions on religion, then,' exclaims another. And who shall be the teachers, and what books shall be read? 'Such as are in favour of no opinions.' Then they must be blank books, and blank teachers. 'Be it so. Let atheists be our professors.' What! an atheist teach astronomy? or chemistry? or mental philosophy? The stars in their course would fight against him; the gases would prove him mad; the economy of the human faculties would convict him an idiot. The thing is impossible. All men, consequently all teachers, have their opinions on religion. And something on the subject, directly or indirectly, will be taught. But if it were practicable, would it be desirable for young men to be educated without religion? Shall no prayers be offered in their hearing to the Father of Lights? Shall the Saviour of the world receive no homage from the young? His heavenly doctrine no commendation from their instructers? Shall we quote Socrates, and not Paul? Demosthenes, and not Isaiah? Pindar, and not David? Seneca, and not Jesus? The public may say so, if it please them; but when they do, the day and date of the prohibition will be the day and date of the country's doom. Is there no middle course? Certainly there is. Let our youth be taught to fear God and keep his commandments; but let their teachers be enlightened, liberal-minded men, men of science, and they will find employment

enough for themselves and their pupils on congenial subjects, and be under no temptation to lead them into the dark and thorny wilderness of mystical theology.

"When many foolish and disgusting practices become connected with the outward forms of religion, or when many trivial and doubtful tenets are magnified into articles of faith, there will be, of course, abundant matter for disputation; and one of the worst consequences attending such a state of things is, that, while the unreflecting many attach great importance to trifles, others will be tempted to discard the whole. For when truth and error, things grave and things ludicrous, are blended together, it is easier at once to throw *all* overboard than to separate the one from the other. This, then, if I mistake not, is the danger of the times. Thus, because some observe one day sacred, and some another, others are for having no Sabbath; because some are bigoted, others will be skeptical; because it cannot be agreed among the different sects whose creed is the best, others are for discarding all creeds; and in the matter of education, because all cannot perfectly coïncide on all points of religious doctrine, it is thought best by many that there should be no points. I will quarrel with no man about his religious belief; yet I very much question the prudence and policy as well as the propriety of such a course. One man prefers beef, another pork; one cabbage, another potatoes. Shall I, therefore, eat nothing? Of the different roads leading to a given point, it is disputed which is best. Shall I, therefore, take neither? One of my neighbours lives in a brick house; another prefers a frame. Shall I, therefore, live out of doors? Shall I advocate anarchy, till politicians have determined what sort of government is to be preferred? In all these cases men uniformly decide that something is better than nothing. And in religion, it is surely better to have some error than no truth. Only let us be careful not to impose *our* views of truth upon others. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind; but let him not cherish such prejudices against those who differ from him as preclude the exercise of charity, and lead to the calling of hard names, misrepresentations, and every species of unreasonable opposition. No man who gives himself up to such a spirit can be a real Christian, however confident he may be in his pretensions and the soundness of his experience. And were the alternative proposed to my choice, whether to stand at the final and decisive judgment which awaits us all, in the condition of such a Christian, or in that of the moderate infidel, who takes his views of duty and of the character and government of God from nature alone, I should unhesitatingly prefer the latter. For, whatever may be the fate of such an infidel, such an illnatured Christian as can allow no mercy for others need expect none for himself. Yet, in guarding against bigotry and sectarianism, let us beware of the opposite extreme, that of laying aside the great and fundamental doctrines of revealed religion. The sanctions of moral duty which are discoverable by the light of nature alone have but little practical influence on the philosopher, and none at all on the multitude. The urgency of present temptation is too powerful for the abstract reasoning of the mere moralist. Conscience would be but a feeble monitor, if men could silence the thunders of Sinai; and the tribunal of feeble opinion would be both corrupted and despised, were it not for that more awful tribunal which is erected at the entrance of another world. The sword, too, of the civil magistrate would interpose an unavailing obsta-

cle in the way of the transgressor, were it not for that almighty Arm which holds the thunderbolt, ready to be launched against the head of the guilty. Besides, who would care to struggle through the thousand difficulties which beset the path of virtue, and forego the present advantages which not seldom are found on the side of vice, were he not cheered and supported by the thought that he is not left alone in a world forsaken of God, but that He is the witness of his conduct, and will compensate his losses and reward his labours at the resurrection of the just? For my part, fellow-citizens, my mind is decided on this subject. Education without religion is worse than none; and this legislature, I thank God, are neither strong enough to compel me, nor rich enough to bribe me, to enter a seminary within whose walls religion may not find a place. I would not be understood as insinuating, by this declaration, even the slightest suspicion that there exists in this respectable body, or any member of it, a disposition such as would prompt to such a course. But I wish, on this occasion as on every other, to be candid, explicit, and unreserved." — pp. 15 – 18.

These are noble sentiments. We respect the moral courage which could present them to such an audience. And when we remember the reputed Orthodoxy of the author, and know that he is regarded as the champion of the Presbyterian denomination, we much admire their genuine liberality. His views on physical, intellectual, and moral education are equally bold, sound, and valuable. Some of our college presidents this side of the mountains might be benefited by their cordial adoption. Perhaps some may think there is a want of good taste in some of the illustrations we have quoted; but we consider such an objection as altogether out of place. If you wish to produce any effect upon an audience, you must be distinctly understood. You must not expect that refinement in an assembly of western legislators which you may find in the halls of a university. That, surely, is the best style for anad dress, which best accomplishes the purposes of the author; and we heartily wish this fundamental rule were more sacredly regarded by all public speakers.

The Bloomington College is well endowed, having lands to the amount of nearly five hundred thousand dollars; not quite one hundred thousand of which is yet productive. With such a president the institution must prove an invaluable blessing to the whole state, and even to the whole valley of the Mississippi.

B. Whitman.

Farewell Sermon. By Rev. Wells Bushnell, [late Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Meadville, Pennsylvania.]

There is nothing remarkable in the general character of this sermon, and nothing which would have led us to notice it, but for a single paragraph which it contains. This passage is somewhat curious as being a tolerably fair specimen of the manner in which the Presbyterians of the west are pleased to speak of Unitarians and Unitarianism; it may, therefore, be worth the quoting.

"I have no fear that any of you who have been born from above will ever be left to reject any of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel — such as the doctrine of the Trinity — the supreme divinity and vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ — the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, &c. No true Christian, I am well persuaded, ever rejects any of these vitally important truths of Christianity, or continues any length of time in doubts about them; yet Christians may not be as much alive to their importance as they ought to be — they may not look upon those who reject them to be in as great danger as they are actually in. . . . . Now I would solemnly warn you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, against any kind of compromise in religious matters with those who hold and inculcate the soul-ruining sentiments to which I have just alluded. Let not the senseless cry of bigotry, intolerance, and persecution prevent you from calling that system of religion by its right name, viz., a refined kind of deism — absolute infidelity — another gospel — and, in the language of Scripture, a damnable heresy. Be assured, Unitarianism, in some of its forms, such is its adaptation to the depraved hearts of men, will gain ground among you, unless the friends of evangelical truth continue to bear their united and solemn testimony against it. Only let the sentiment become common among the Orthodox, that it is possible for Unitarians to be true Christians, and to be saved, while relying upon that system, and the mischief that will follow no tongue can tell. When that fatal hour arrives, (I pray God it may never come,) then will the glory have departed from all your churches — then will all right regard for the holy truth of God be absent, and the consequences, I hesitate not to say, will be fearful! I thank God that I have been permitted so long to bear testimony against this arch-delusion. And it is a matter of little consequence to me what verdict may be passed by some on my motives for giving this last warning and testimony against Unitarianism. I appeal from the tribunal of their judgment, *to the judgment-seat of Christ.*"

There are certain among us who will, doubtless, regard this as quite spiceless and insipid. It is sad to think that men's palates can become so depraved that nothing should have power to gratify them short of the poisoned reputation of their brethren. As for Mr. Bushnell, we are sorry that he should have felt occasion thus to appeal from human judgment as to his *motives* in defaming Unitarians; but we cannot but feel equal concern

for him in view of what we deem the certainty that his appeal will hardly avail for his acquittal from the charge of *actual* defamation, however *intended.* G. NICHOLS.

An Essay on Demoniacs. By PLAIN TRUTH.

The author of this production has not seen proper to let his name appear on the title-page. We understand, however, that it was written by a gentleman who was graduated at Andover about seven years since, and is now settled in the ministry over an Orthodox society in Connecticut. The essay consists of thirty-two closely printed duodecimo pages, and is published by the Messrs. Adams at Amherst. The writer has investigated this important subject for himself, and has dared to give the results of his inquiries to the public, although they coincide with the views usually maintained by Unitarians. His arguments are scriptural, his style perspicuous, his reasoning conclusive, and his spirit Christian. We know of no work so well adapted for general circulation on this question, and we hope the publishers will supply our booksellers in this vicinity. One or two extracts will show some of the obstacles which a lover of truth has to encounter in this land of free inquiry.

"I have offered this essay to most of the periodicals in New England, but none of them have independence enough to publish it; and therefore I do it myself. I well know that the easiest way to public favour is to write for some party; and that it is attended with *not a little danger* for a man to think for himself, and publish what he does think, without regard to prevailing opinions. I do not expect to please any party, and shall probably be frowned upon by most. I have a higher object than to please, and that is, to establish the meaning of Scripture. If I suffer in consequence of this, I hope to take it patiently. I do not wish to occupy much of any man's time, and consequently have adopted for my motto, 'Brevity and perspicacity.'

"Professor Stuart has said that he can overthrow this essay '*as easily* as he can perform a sum in addition.' He has *promised* to do it, and I hope he will. I think, too, he is under *obligation* to do it; for, previous to 1826, he declined giving his pupils any instructions upon this subject, because he did not understand it; though now it is 'a sum in addition.'

"I have no interest in the views here presented. If they are not correct I shall rejoice in seeing the errors detected; and shall gladly relinquish any position when convinced that it is wrong."

We would recommend to Unitarian ministers to distribute this essay among their people. It contains, within a small compass, all that needs to be said on the subject; and, coming from an Orthodox minister, will not be likely to excite any fears in the minds of the most timid and wavering. B. WHITMAN.

CORRESPONDENCE AND INTELLIGENCE.

Extract from a Letter to one of the Editors.

"My Dear Sir,

"I received your letter with the first number of the periodical. I am truly glad you have undertaken the work. I trust that it will be what you intend it, a work for the *people*. The complaint has been that the writings of Unitarians have not been adapted to the community at large, but to the educated; and there has been too much ground for it; and hence the reproach thrown on this faith, that it wants power over the common mind. Some cautions are needed to your greatest success. Whilst the work is plain and forcible, it must be fitted to raise and refine the reader. We cannot be too plain, simple, direct; but when we consider that our object is, to make men like God, to bring them to the adoration of Infinite Goodness, to sympathy with the pure and all-sacrificing love of Christ, to hunger and thirst for perfection, to conflict with all sin, we must see that the beneficence and grandeur of our purpose require us to abstain from the coarse style of partisanship so common in the political and religious world. I want *force*, much more than any of us have. I prefer even homeliness to pointless, spiritless elegance. I only want that the force and homeliness should spring from and express a noble, generous concern for the mass of men, and for the spread of the sublime principles of Christian truth and virtue.

I like the tone of your first number, so far as I have been able to examine it. I wish you would give your readers a new impulse in regard to the *great object* of Christian philanthropy, and that is, the regeneration of the world, the intellectual and moral elevation of the mass of the people, a deep reform in all classes of society, in all parties and sects, and a new and faithful application of Christian principles to all the relations, employments, pleasures, studies of life. The *spirit of reformation* is what we all need to learn, practise, teach, and spread around us. The present intellectual and moral condition should be a burden and grief to us all. We want a body of Christians who will comprehend the condition and wants of society as has never been done yet, and who will devote themselves, their hearts, time, substance, lives, to its regeneration. As far as your work can create this spirit it will be invaluable. Indeed, I know nothing which would do us so much good. I am heartily glad that you are about to expose and withstand the infidelity which *now* exists among us. This is the kind of operation I desire. Wishing you a divine blessing, I am truly your friend."

THE UNITARIAN CHURCH IN MEADVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA.

Although to many of our readers the name of Meadville has long been quite familiar, and the village itself has been regarded with interest on account of the Unitarian church established there, yet it may be well to state, for the information of others, that it is a flourishing and an exceedingly pleasant little town, with a population of about thirteen hundred inhabitants, situated in the western part of Pennsylvania, on one of the tributaries of the Ohio. Those of our New England friends who have chanced to visit it remember it with much delight, of which the recollection of the truly generous hospitality of the gentleman who gave the first impulse to pure Christianity in that region, and has since stood foremost in its support, constitutes by no means a small part. To the able writings of this gentleman, not less, cer-

tainly, than to his very liberal pecuniary contributions, does the Unitarian society of Meadville, under God, owe its present prosperity, and its existence even. After several years, earnest study of the Scriptures, such as few among the clergy have ever bestowed, having become clearly convinced that the doctrines of Unitarianism were the doctrines of the Bible, he at once resolved on giving them his public testimony. Of the obloquy attending such a profession in that region, at that time, few among us have any just conception. From the pulpit and from the press a torrent of personal abuse and invective was immediately poured out upon him. That from the pulpit he sat and calmly listened to, pitying it. To that from the press he replied, by entering at once upon an exposition of the grounds of his faith, in a series of strong articles, following one upon another, week after week, through a space of many months. For a long period he stood alone. But at length the public mind, as might have been anticipated, was obliged to give way before the force of his arguments. Numbers became converted to the Unitarian faith, and soon Unitarian preaching was procured. It was not, however, until the year 1830, that constant preaching could be obtained. In the spring of that year a society was regularly organized under Rev. Mr. Peabody, since of Cincinnati. Under the auspices of Mr. Peabody, a monthly periodical was also commenced, "The Unitarian Essayist," which was supported for two years, chiefly by the contributions of the gentleman above alluded to; when it was discontinued, through want of leisure in the principal contributor — to the exceeding regret of those who were in the practice of perusing its able articles, and who knew how eagerly it was sought after through a wide circuit.

From the period of its organization to the present time, the Meadville church has continued to grow rapidly; the congregation, latterly, having usually numbered nearly two hundred; among whom, it is a cheering fact, are to be reckoned (not to speak invidiously,) *a full proportion*, at the least, of the truly intelligent and devout of the village. For some months, since the death of its late lamented minister, Rev. A. Brigham, the church has been without a pastor. We rejoice to learn, that it has, notwithstanding, continued to prosper; the pulpit having been, meantime, supplied by a reader. Within a few weeks, however, it has succeeded in engaging Rev. A. D. Wheeler as a successor to Mr. Brigham. We would remark, by the way, that Mr. Wheeler is the first to sustain the sole office of pastor to this society — his predecessors having united with this office that of tutor in the family of the gentleman above alluded to. After Mr. Brigham's decease, some difficulty having been anticipated in respect to procuring a person to fill both offices, the society resolved to obtain a pastor who should be exclusively devoted to their interests; and raised at once for this object the very liberal, and, for that region, ample salary of five hundred dollars. — We cannot too heartily commend the efforts by which this church has been established. May the example be emulated, as it deserves.

Should this notice meet the eye of the gentleman who has been alluded to as the founder of the Meadville church, we trust he will pardon the liberty we have taken. When so many, all over the country, who are of us, nevertheless, through fear of man, hesitate to avow their sentiments, and join openly with us, and this to the incalculable injury

of the cause of truth and the world's best interests, such examples are needed.

We conclude this somewhat protracted notice with a short extract from a letter, dated Meadville, Dec. 12, 1833. After some remarks respecting the general anxiety which was then felt among the people to obtain a pastor, the writer proceeds:

"I have been reading them Channing for several Sabbaths. They listen with breathless attention; it is really inspiring. There are more or less strangers present every time; they cannot resist Channing, but always come to hear the second part of a discourse. What might not a good minister do here just now! — The Sunday-school, too, is very interesting. As soon as the weather will permit we shall have meetings of the Sunday-school teachers. These little associations keep the society together, and make Unitarianism appear so interesting that there is a great curiosity among others to hear what it is, and to draw near its blaze, which they seem to quit reluctantly."

UNITARIANISM IN DETROIT.

Extract of a Letter dated Detroit, December 11th, 1833.

"Your prospectus of 'The Unitarian' came duly to hand some weeks since. Its presence was greeted by our small though devoted band, like a herald in the wilderness. Be assured it could not have come in a better time. Rev. Mr. Pierpont [of Boston] had just been among us, and the impress of his gifted mind was still vivid. You have probably heard that he was compelled to preach in the court-room of our capitol, from an unwillingness on the part of our Orthodox brethren to admit *such a heretic* into their pulpits. But discouraging as this was, and in spite of the distance from the centre of the city, he was listened to, on the first evening, by a large and attentive audience. An unfortunate mistake in regard to the public notice prevented a similar fulness on the next evening. One thing is worthy of note, Mr. Pierpont's was the *first* Unitarian sermon ever preached in Michigan. We have a paper circulating for the signatures of such as are independent enough to avow their real sentiments.

"You see I have obtained some names for your periodical. Its circulation in this community, and the consequent dissemination of the liberal principles it is intended to inculcate, will prepare the way for the organization of a Unitarian society before many months. You may be assured of my utmost exertions in its behalf. The names below are all influential ones.

"I know, and feel every day, the unpopularity of Unitarianism in the west. I am aware that in a professional point of view I gain nothing. But what is all this, contrasted with the time-serving, slavish fear that chains a man to silence, because, if he speaks, he wars with the multitude? I shall act independently, fearlessly, come what may."

So long as Unitarians are animated by such a spirit, (and, thank God! it is not rare in our infant churches,) there is nothing to fear; the truth *must* prevail.

INSTALLATION. — January 1st, Rev. A. B. Muzzey was installed as pastor of the First Congregational Society in Cambridgeport. Sermon by Rev. Mr. Briggs of Lexington.

☞ *The importance to the interests of Christianity that all movements affecting the progress of truth, wherever they may occur, should be generally known, induces the Editors earnestly to solicit the communication of articles of intelligence on this subject.*